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Grace and prayer explained according to the Munich ...

Joseph John Baierl

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Harvard Divinity School



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"By the Grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. XV, 10). — "Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight". (Ps. CXL, 2.)

GRACE AND PRAYER EXPLAINED

**ACCORDING TO THE MUNICH
OR PSYCHOLOGICAL METHOD**

**FOR CHILDREN OF THE
INTERMEDIATE AND HIGHER GRADES**

**BASED ON THE BALTIMORE
CATECHISM (No. 2) AND
DEHARBE'S CATECHISM**

AN AID TO CATECHISTS

**BY
REV. JOSEPH J. BAIERL**

**THE SEMINARY PRESS
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1921

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PREFACE

The purpose of this little volume on Grace and Prayer is to offer to catechists some practical aids in the exercise of their noble office, as ministers of the word. These instructions, which are an adaptation of the splendid work of Dr. H. Stieglitz: "Ausgeführte Katechesen über die katholische Gnadenlehre" I Teil (Jos. Kösel'sche Buchhandlung, Kempten & Munich, 1908), are based on the Baltimore Catechism (No. 2). We have supplemented what is wanting, especially on the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, from Deharbe's Catechism.

As regards method the lessons are arranged in accordance with the principles of the so-called Munich or Psychological Method of catechization. The reader is urged to study these principles as outlined in the Preface of our volume "The Creed Explained."

The catechist will find further helpful suggestions in the following *Bibliography*. Pohle-Preuss: Grace—Actual and Habitual (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1915); Rev. E. J. Wirth D.D.: Divine Grace (Benziger Bros., N. Y., 1903); The Catechism of the Council of Trent, trans. into English by Rev. J. Donovan D.D.; (J. Duffy & Co., Dublin); Rev. F. Girardey C.S.S.R.: Prayer, Its Necessity, Its Power, Its Conditions (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1916); Exposition of Christian Doctrine by a Seminary Professor (John Jos. McVey, Philadelphia, Pa., 1920); F. Spirago & F. Clarke S.J.: The Catechism Explained (Benziger Bros., N. Y.); F. Spirago & J. Baxter: Anecdotes And Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism (Benziger Bros., N. Y.); Thos. L. Kinkead: An Explanation of the Baltimore Catechism (Benziger

Bros., N. Y.) ; W. Faerber & F. Girardey C.S.S.R.: Commentary on the Catechism (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1906) ; Rev. Geo. Howe: The Catechist, vol. I (R. & T. Washbourne, London, 1898) ; D. Chisholm: The Catechism in Examples, vols. III and IV (R. & T. Washbourne, London, 1909) ; Rev. P. Power: Catechism, Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, Liturgical, vols. II and III (J. Duffy & Co., Dublin, 1905) ; Dr. A. Weber: Ausgeführte Katechesen über das dritte Hauptstück für das 5. Schuljahr (Jos. Kösel'sche Buchhandlung, Kempten & Munich, 1904) ; C. Muff O.S.B.: Katechesen für die vier obern Klassen der Primarschule vol. II (Benziger Bros., N. Y., 1910) ; Dr. Jos. Schmitt: Erklärungen des mittleren Deharbschen Katechismus, vol. III (10' ed., B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo.) ; Dr. A. Baumeister: Katechesen über den mittleren Katechismus, vol. III (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1904) ; J. Linden S.J.: Deharbes grössere Katechismuserklärung, vol. III (Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn, 1912) ; Dr. J. Klug: Die ewigen Quellen (Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn, 1916) ; Katechetische Blätter, *passim*.

May the Divine Friend of little children bless our efforts.

THE AUTHOR.

Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, 1921,
Rochester, N. Y.

I.
GRACE.

LESSON I.

The Necessity of Grace.

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) Is grace necessary to salvation? L. X, Q. 111.
- 2) What do you mean by grace? L. X, Q. 103.

Preparation. Dear children, we are created for Heaven. What a happiness some day to see God and to adore Him forever with the Angels and the Saints! But it is not so easy to get to Heaven. What do you need for Heaven?—Without Faith no Heaven! But Faith is a divine gift. In Baptism the Holy Ghost placed this divine seed in your soul. Now it is already sprung up: you believe what the Church teaches. And soon the Holy Ghost will come again and strengthen you in the Faith—in Confirmation.

But it is not yet enough for Heaven to believe rightly and firmly. Once a young man came to our Divine Saviour and asked: "Good Master, what must I do to obtain life eternal?" Jesus answered: "If thou wilt enter into eternal life, keep the Commandments." That, then, is the way to Heaven: Keep the Commandments! But I wonder, whether we are able by ourselves to do that? Just think of how difficult it is often for you to pray and to obey and to be kind! And yet, God wills it; otherwise you cannot be saved. But to do that you need help from above.

Aim. I must tell you that a little more exactly in this first lesson: *how much we need God's help to be able to keep the Commandments and to be saved.* I am going to show you that in a parable.

Presentation. Once our Divine Saviour happened to be in Capharnaum on the lovely Lake of Genesareth. Throughout the whole day He had been teaching the multitudes of people and healing the sick in a miraculous manner. It was already evening and it was beginning to get dark. Then Jesus entered into a little boat with His disciples and ordered them to row over the lake. Tired from the heavy labor of the day He lay down and fell asleep. But the multitudes stood on the shore and looked after Him reverently.

And behold! while the disciples were rowing quietly, suddenly a violent storm swept across the lake and cast the waves high into the air. The little boat was tossed to and fro like a little toy. To the right and the left the water splashed into the boat. It might sink into the abyss any moment or be dashed to pieces on the shores. The disciples worked with all their life's strength. But all in vain; they are no longer able to master the waves. Deathly fear lays hold of them. All believe, that their last hour has come. In their extreme need they awaken their Master and cry out: "Lord, help us! We perish!" And Jesus said to them: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then He arose and commanded the wind and the sea: "Wind, be still! Sea, be quiet!" And the storm abated, and again there was a solemn silence over the face of the wide lake. (*Show the pupils a large picture of this scene.*)

Explanation. 1. In this parable you see a picture of human life. Our life is like a journey over the sea. We should and we do desire one day to arrive safely on the other shore—Heaven. But oftentimes severe storms break in upon us. Do you know what these storms are?—I mean the dangers of sin: dangers of wicked men—they would like to seduce you; dangers of the devil—he would like to destroy you; dangers of the wicked inclinations in your heart—they would like to incite you to do wrong. These are great dangers

from without and from within. Then it happens often to us just as it did to the disciples on that lake. They worked with all their life's strength, but they were no longer able to master the wildly tossing waves. In their need they cried out for help. Then Jesus became their Saviour in their mortal danger. We too are not able by our own strength to overcome the dangers to sin and be saved. For that we need God's help—divine grace. Only thus can we arrive safely in Heaven. Can we, then, be saved by our own strength?—No, we need divine grace. Grace is necessary for salvation. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.*) The Holy Ghost gives us grace.

2. I will now show you more clearly, how very much we need divine grace. You know, that God does not give us Heaven for nothing; we must earn, or merit, Heaven for ourselves. Jesus has said so plainly enough: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments" (Matt. xix, 17). Let us briefly look at only a few of the Commandments.

God commands us in the first Commandment to believe and pray. But that is not always so easy. The Apostles did not succeed very well in doing that; therefore they begged their Master: "Lord, increase our Faith!" (Luke xvii, 5). Do you see? To believe one needs grace. In the second Commandment God forbids the desecration and abuse of His Holy Name. Many a one says: "O! I cannot stop cursing." I am indeed prepared to believe you; it cannot be done without God's grace. Think again of the fourth Commandment. For children generally there is nothing more difficult than to obey. But if God helps it is easy. In the sixth Commandment God commands, that we detest and avoid all that is impure and immodest. Now there are thousands of dangers and temptations; especially when you get bigger they will also become stronger. Without God's help you surely will not preserve your innocence. St. Augustine experienced that

in his own case and humbly confessed: "I thought, that I could lead a pure and a holy life by my own strength; but I was too weak. Then I began to pray." For what did he pray?—He prayed for strength from above. Now things became easy and all went well.—Then, too, you ought always to confess well. That is impossible without God. What, therefore, should you do before going to Confession?—"Come, Holy Ghost!" What must you do before receiving Holy Communion?—God must help you to prepare by His holy grace.

Do you see how much we need divine grace?—Never forget, then, that without the grace of God, we cannot, by our own natural strength, keep the Commandments and be saved; we cannot earn, or merit, Heaven. Our Catechism says: Grace is necessary to salvation, because without grace we can do nothing to merit Heaven. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) Jesus Himself has said that very expressly: "Without Me you can do nothing." How would He have us understand that?—Without My help, without My grace, you can do nothing good for Heaven and cannot get to Heaven.

3. Now you can easily tell me: What is grace?—*Grace is a help of God bestowed on us for our salvation.* (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) But you must understand that properly. I also help you to be saved; for I would like to make of you good Christian children and one day children of God in Heaven. Your parents and teachers also give you good words of counsel, good example; sometimes, if other means are useless—also punishment; they want thereby to get you to Heaven. But all this is only an outward help. But God helps you *interiorly* in your soul.—God has also given you life and He continues to give it to you every moment. That is a natural gift, for life belongs to the nature of man. But grace is much more than that; grace is a *supernatural* help. Of course, God does not owe us His grace. He gives us grace out of pure love and mercy. Grace is a pure gift, or present, from God. *Jesus has earned, or merit-*

ed, all grace for us by His death on the Cross; He gave His Precious Blood in payment for it: God gives us grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. Now what I have just told you briefly our Catechism says in these words: By grace I mean a supernatural gift of God, bestowed on us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for our salvation. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Write on the blackboard:

1. Grace necessary — for Commandments and for Heaven.
2. Grace — help, gift, of God for our salvation: merited by Christ.

Synthesis. Now you can already understand a little, how very precious divine grace is. But soon you will understand it even better. Meanwhile remember: Can we by our own natural strength keep the Commandments and be saved?—In what words does Jesus say clearly, that grace is necessary for us?—What do you mean by grace?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class.*)

Application. 1. *Without divine grace we cannot keep the Commandments.* Without grace we are like helpless children. When a little child begins to walk, some one must lead it by the hand. If it tries to walk alone, it falls to the floor every moment. In the life of a Christian it is just the same. The good God must lead us, as it were, by His fatherly hand: He must continually give us His grace, otherwise we will fall often into sin. Just think of Peter! He had solemnly said under oath: "Lord, I am ready to go to death for Thee!" So great was his self-confidence. But what happened? — After a few hours he had denied his Divine Master three times. So weak can man be without divine grace! Yes, we men are like reeds. Did you ever watch them? Only a little wind is needed

and at once they bend down. Likewise it takes only a little temptation to come over our heart, and immediately we fall deeply without divine grace.

2. But if we need the grace of God so much, we ought also like the disciples of Christ to pray humbly and confidently: "Lord, save us! Lord, help us!" When you find it hard to pray, cry out: "Lord, help me to pray!" If you find it very hard to obey, say: "Lord, help me to obey!" If wicked and detestable things enter into your mind, pray: "Lord, help me to keep my innocence!" If you are tempted to lie out of fear, cry out: "Lord, help me to tell the truth!" When you go to holy Confession, say: "Lord, help me to make a good Confession!"

3. *Without divine grace we cannot be saved.* There is no Saint in Heaven, who can say: I have been saved by my own strength. All must humbly acknowledge, as St. Paul once did: "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (I Cor. xv, 10). And if some day we safely enter into Heaven, we too must say: "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Without God's grace we are nothing; by the grace of God we are everything.

LESSON II.

Actual Grace.

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) What is actual grace? L. X, Q. 110.
- 2) Is actual grace necessary to us? (Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, St. Teresa once said: "Teresa is nothing, but Teresa and God are everything." Those are beautiful and true words. You are already able to understand them.—The Saint means to say: I am nothing but a poor sinner; but by the grace of God I can do all things; I can also become a

Saint. Perfectly true! Without grace there is no merit, or reward, in God's sight; without grace no Heaven. That is what our Catechism also says. Let us review it. (*Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.*)—

The soul is like a workshop of the Holy Ghost. There He works and acts in a mysterious and wonderful manner with His grace. Now you are perhaps a little curious to know, how that happens.

Aim. I am going to tell you that today: *how the Holy Ghost helps us with His grace to avoid evil and to do good.*—You know Saul from your Bible History. He was converted in a wonderful manner and became St. Paul. Let us first relate that story. Then you will easily see, how the grace of the Holy Ghost works in the soul.

Presentation. Saul was a mortal enemy of Christ. He burned with hatred against the Christians and thirsted for their blood like a wild animal. Already he had destroyed the Christian congregation at Jerusalem. He obtained full authority from the High Priest and rode to Damascus, in order there to arrest the Christians and to take them in chains to Jerusalem.

When he drew near the city, suddenly a light from Heaven surrounded him. As though struck by lightning, he fell from his horse to the ground and heard a voice: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" He asked: "Lord, Who art Thou?" The voice answered: "I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest!" Trembling and astonished Saul replied: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" The Lord answered: "Arise and go into the city! There it will be told thee, what thou shouldst do." The companions of Saul stood there all dazed. They indeed heard the voice, but they saw no one. Saul arose. When he opened his eyes, he could not see; he was blind. Then they led him by the hand to Damascus. There he was, for three days, blind and neither ate nor drank.

In Damascus there lived a disciple of Jesus, named Ananias. He came, in the name of the Lord, to Saul, imposed his hands upon him and said: "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me. Thou art to arise and see and be filled with the Holy Ghost!" Immediately there fell from his eyes like scales and he saw again and was baptized. Then he began to preach Jesus and became a most zealous Apostle. Truthfully could he say: "I have labored more than all the others, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (I Cor. xv, 10). *(Show the pupils a large picture of this scene.)*

Explanation. 1. What happened to Saul is most remarkable indeed, is it not? Saul was a mortal enemy of Christ. To persecute the Christians and to cast them into prison, that was for him a great joy. He did not see at all, how wicked and sinful his conduct was; he even imagined, that he was doing a good work. For it was as yet dark in his soul. Suddenly Saul became entirely changed; yes, he himself become a Christian and an Apostle of Christ. Whence this sudden change?—Outwardly a light from Heaven surrounded him, but inwardly the Holy Ghost enlightened him. All at once it became light in his soul; he realized: Saul, what wicked things hast thou done! The Holy Ghost enlightened his mind, so that now he knew the evil he had been doing. Thus does actual grace work in the soul: Actual grace is a help of God, which enlightens our mind. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

2. But to enlighten is not yet enough. Many a one sees the evil very well, and yet, he does it; he knows the good, and still he does not do it. Saul could have closed his ear and heart to the voice of grace of the Holy Ghost and said: I do not want to do it; I will have nothing to do with Christ! But no! he speaks in an entirely different manner: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" Do you see? Saul no longer wanted the evil, but rather the good. Whence comes it, that

suddenly his will was changed? — The Holy Ghost moved his will. Thus does actual grace work: **Actual grace is that help of God, which moves the will to shun evil and do good.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

But from willing to doing it is often a long way. Saul was not yet a Christian; only after three days did he receive Baptism. Meanwhile the Holy Ghost did not desert him any more, but rather helped him to *finish* the great work of his conversion. Do you see? That is how actual grace works: *It enlightens our mind, and inclines our will to avoid evil, and both to will and to do what is good.* The mind, or understanding, and the will are the two arms of the soul, as it were. The Holy Ghost must help us on both arms: He must enlighten the mind and move the will, so that we can avoid evil and do good. Now let us repeat the entire answer of the Catechism. **Actual grace is that help of God which enlightens our mind and moves our will to shun evil and do good.**

3. The conversion of St. Paul is truly wonderful. But without the grace of the Holy Ghost from Saul there would never have been made a Paul. To become a Christian, or even an Apostle of Christ, that would never have entered into his mind. And even though he wanted to do that, he could not have accomplished it. For without grace we are weak and poor and helpless like little children. Without grace we cannot do any good for Heaven. You already know that from Jesus: "Without Me you cannot do anything" (John xv, 5). Thus also does St. Paul teach: "No one can say the Lord Jesus! without the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. xii, 3). "Lord Jesus!" why surely you can say that easily? But without grace of the Holy Ghost, it is of no use to you for salvation. Remember, therefore: *Actual grace is so necessary to us, that without it we can neither begin, continue, nor accomplish the least thing towards our salvation* (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) St. Paul himself has written: "It is God

Who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. ii, 13). You can easily understand that.—If you wish to do something for Heaven, God must first work upon, inspire, your will and then work with you to perform the good deed. That is a principle: Without grace we can do nothing—with grace we can do all things. Remember, then: The grace of assistance, or actual grace, causes the good to come into your mind, makes that good please you and then helps you to perform the good deed. Actual grace causes you to hate evil and helps you not to fall into evil.

Write on the blackboard:

1. Actual grace—1. enlightens—the mind; 2. moves—the will.
2. Without grace—no good for salvation.

Synthesis. Now you have seen, how very wonderfully the Holy Ghost works and acts in the soul. To be sure, all that happens in a very mysterious manner. How did grace work in Saul?—In what, therefore, does actual grace consist?—Many a one thinks, he is able to do good alone, of himself. Is that true?—Is actual grace necessary for us?—What does Christ say?—What does St. Paul say?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class.*)

Application. 1. Let us look at the working of actual grace by means of another example. Peter denied his Divine Master shamefully three times. Just then Jesus was led by. He looked at the Apostle with love and sorrowful longing. That glance penetrated the heart of the faithless Apostle like the blow of a dagger. Suddenly he became conscious: Peter, what did you do? Then he went out and wept bitterly. What do his tears of contrition say?—Do you see?—Grace first enlightened his mind and then moved his will.

One more example from life! A child wants to con-

fess. It has indeed big sins, but not a big contrition. Now it looks for a few moments thoughtfully at Jesus on the Cross. All of a sudden it is as though Jesus becomes alive on the Cross and begins to speak: "My child, what have I done for thee and what hast thou done to Me?" Then the child feels sorrowful in its heart. It confesses with true contrition and promises to do better. How did actual grace work in the heart of the child?—

2. Now some of you might think, that grace is necessary only for conversion and for Confession. No, without grace nothing for Heaven, without grace not a good Our Father! Just listen! Two children have received money from their mother; they may buy candy with it. Outside they meet a blind beggar. One of the children at once feels sympathy and says: "The poor man! I am going to give him my pennies." Thereupon the other child says: "I am also with you; for it will please the poor man and it will not hurt us!" Afterwards it seems as though an inner voice says: You have given that alms to Jesus. There you see actual grace: it causes good to come into one's mind, it makes one like the good and helps one to do the good.

Bad things enter into a child's mind; it almost takes pleasure in them. But then suddenly it thinks: God knows it! God detests it! and quickly it drives the bad thoughts from its mind; the temptation is conquered. There you see actual grace again; it causes us to hate evil and keeps us from falling into sin.

3. St. Paul labored with a real fiery zeal to convert Jews and pagans. What does he himself say?—"I have labored more than all the others." But very humbly he adds: "Yet not I, but the grace of God in me." That is true. The farmer sows the seed, but God gives the increase. Thus also did St. Paul sow the seed of the divine word into men's hearts; but God gave His blessing to the work. Without the grace of God, all his labors and work would have been in

vain. So it is with us all. If we avoid evil and do good, we must humbly confess: "I have not done that, but the grace of God with me." How then can any one still be proud? May you then be proud of the good you do, or if you are better than other children? No, you ought to thank the Holy Ghost for that and say, as Jesus admonishes us: "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do" (Luke xvii, 10).

LESSON III.

Grace and Free Will.

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) Does God give His grace to all men? (Deharbe)
- 2) Can we resist the grace of God? L. X, Q. 112.
- 3) What must we do on our part, in order that the grace of God may conduce to our salvation? (Deharbe)
- 4) What is the grace of perseverance? L. X, Q. 113.

Preparation. Dear children, who of you has already listened to a sermon? What does the priest do before the sermon?—Each time he prays to the Holy Ghost. Do you also know why?—The priest may preach ever so well, without the Holy Ghost the sermon has no efficacy; it enters only into the ears, but not into the heart. But if the Holy Ghost co-operates, the sermon touches the heart of the people. Actual grace does that. You already know how actual grace works and how necessary it is. (*Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson.*)

Without grace there is no good. But if a person does good, did the Holy Ghost force him to do it? Or if a sinner does evil, can he make the excuse: The Holy Ghost did not help? These are important questions.

Aim. I must instruct you a little more concerning these points: *Man is free to do good or to do evil.* I shall show you that from the conduct of two sinners: the one was converted and the other remained impenitent. You know them from the Bible History—they are the two thieves on the cross.

Presentation. It was the first Good Friday. The dying Saviour hung on the Cross. Two murderers were crucified with Him, the one to the right and the other to the left. A great crowd of people stood about the Cross. Many ridiculed and poked fun at the dying Christ: "Vah, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it again in three days, help Thyself! If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross!" Likewise the High Priests and scribes and ancients taunted Him, saying: "He hath helped others, Himself He cannot help. If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him" (Matt. xxvii, 38-42). One of the two criminals also blasphemed Jesus and said: "If Thou be the Christ, help Thyself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him and said: "Dost thou not fear God, since thou sufferest this punishment? But we justly, for we receive what we have deserved, but this man hath done no evil." Then he turned to Jesus and begged: "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!" And Jesus said to him: "Amen, I say to thee: this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii 39-43). (*Show the pupils a large picture of this scene.*)

Explanation. 1. "All is well, that ends well"—that is what one can say of the thief to the right of Jesus. His life was a long life of sin, yes, even the life of a criminal. The death penalty was the just reward for his sins. He himself realized that and acknowledged it: "We have received what we deserved." But how came it, that from the sinner was made a Saint?—

The grace of God did that. For a long time the wicked fellow rejected the grace of God, and yet, the Holy Ghost did not desert him. Even while the criminal was hanging on the cross and was near death's door, the Holy Ghost once more let the rays of His grace shine into his sinful heart; once more He admonished him interiorly and urged him: Be converted, it is high time! The sinner listened to the voice of God's grace, repented of his sinful life and begged humbly: "Lord, remember me, when Thou enterest into Thy kingdom!" Then the Lord spoke the consoling and blessed words: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise!"

Now tell me: To whom does God give His grace?—God gives to every man, even to the greatest sinner, at least as much grace as is necessary or sufficient to be saved. We see that clearly in the case of the good thief. *God gives to all men sufficient grace to enable them to work out their salvation. (Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)* That is certainly most true. Jesus Himself assures us of that: "God gives the good Spirit to them who ask" (Luke xi, 13).

2. Now let us look at the thief to the left of Christ. Here one sees the truth of the saying: As one lives, so does one die! But you will perhaps ask: Why did the Holy Ghost help the other thief and not this one? But here you have asked incorrectly. The Holy Ghost let a ray of His grace shine also into the heart of this criminal; He also admonished and urged him: Be converted; there is still time, but it is high time! However, the sinner was unwilling, but rather thought to himself: I do not want to be converted; it is all the same to me. As I have lived, so will I die! And he died in his sins and went down into the eternal abyss.

Do you see? The one co-operated faithfully with grace, the other resisted grace; the one was saved, the other was lost. If man is unwilling to work out

his salvation, he can no longer be saved. Our Catechism says: **We can and unfortunately often do resist the grace of God.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

3. But what must man do, in order that grace may be useful to him for salvation?—*In order that the grace of God may conduce to our salvation, we must not resist it, but faithfully co-operate with it.* (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) To do good two must work together, or co-operate: God and man. Every good work is God's work and man's work: God's work, because He must give His grace; man's work, because man must faithfully co-operate with grace.

4. That is true for every single moment of our life, but it is true especially for the last moments of our earthly career just before death. Then we need God's grace most of all, for the devil tries to deprive us of God's grace, when we are about to leave this life, and thus he plots to cast us into eternal woe. Surely then a very special grace, or gift, of God is necessary for us, in order that we may continue, persevere, faithfully in God's friendship until the end. We call this special present of God the grace of final perseverance. Our Catechism says: **The grace of perseverance is a particular gift of God which enables us to continue in the state of grace till death.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) Strictly speaking, we cannot merit this grace, but only pray for it. Do you not want God to keep you from sin till the day of your death, and take you while you are His friends? Well then, pray earnestly each day for this special gift of God—the grace of perseverance.

5. Now some one might object: The Holy Ghost ought to have worked more strongly on the will, so that the thief to the left of the Saviour might also have been saved. Therefore you imagine: God ought to have forced that sinner to be converted. But that God never does. He offers man His grace; but then He leaves it to man to accept it or to reject it. Now man

can, like the good thief, open his heart to grace and say: I will! or he can, like the wicked thief, close his heart to grace and say: I will not! Man has perfect freedom, he can do good and can do evil. For *God's grace does not force the human will, but leaves it perfectly free. (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* To be sure, if man abuses his free will, it can be to his destruction. Therefore the word of God admonishes: "Today if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" (Ps. xciv, 8). You can easily understand that.—If you hear interiorly the voice of God's grace: pray, confess, be converted, amend your life! then your heart ought not to remain as hard as a stone.

Write on the blackboard:

1. God gives—sufficient grace to all.
2. Man can—resist, or co-operate.
3. To be saved man must — co-operate with God's grace.
4. Grace of perseverance—special gift of God to remain in friendship of God to end.
5. Grace does not compel—leaves us perfect freedom of will.

Synthesis. "God will have all men to be saved" (I Tim. ii, 4) says St. Paul. But man is free to do good or evil. We see that clearly in the case of the two thieves. Does God give His grace to all men?—With what words does Christ express this truth?—But what must man do, that grace may conduce to his salvation?—Can man resist the grace of God?—What do you mean by the grace of final perseverance?—What does St. Paul say about co-operating with God's grace? (*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class.*)

Application. 1. Many a Christian asks anxiously and with solicitude: I wonder whether I shall be

saved? How can you doubt about that? God gives sufficient grace to every one. You know the parable of the talents, do you not? A rich and distinguished man journeyed into a strange country. But first he called his servants together and gave his fortune into their keeping: to one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one, to each he gave according to his powers. "Work with those talents," he said, "until I return!" Do you know what talents signify? They are the talents of grace, which God commits to the care of men. Not every man receives the same amount of grace from God; but each one receives as much as is required to obtain Heaven. Therefore do not worry yourselves uselessly. Just do your part and God will do His!

2. Man is free; he can resist the will of God. Just think of Pharaoh. Moses spoke in God's name: "Let My people depart!" But the king resisted God, saying: "I will not let the people depart." To be sure, for being unwilling to obey he had to feel the anger of God.—Think of Jonas. God said to the Prophet: "Go to the city of Nineveh and preach there, that their wickedness cries to Me in Heaven!" But Jonas was unwilling and fled. But punishment followed in his steps.—Think of Jerusalem. Jesus wept and lamented over that unhappy city: "How often would I have gathered thy children about Me as a hen does her little ones, but thou wouldst not." Do you see? Jesus offered His grace to the Jews, but they resisted it.

3. Man has perfect liberty of will. You yourselves know that well enough. Did not your conscience often warn you of evil? But you did not listen. Did not an interior voice admonish you to do good? And you did not do it. If man were not free, there would not be any sin. Every one could make the excuse: I cannot help it; I had to do the evil! But it is not so. In that case God could not cast any one into Hell. And yet it does happen; Jesus said so often.

4. Do you also know, why men are lost forever?

They are unwilling to co-operate with grace. Now if some one is lost, can he say to God: Thou art to blame for my destruction? No, the damned must accuse themselves: I myself am to blame for my ruin, because I did not listen to the voice of God's grace. That is precisely a part of the punishment of Hell. That is "the worm that dieth not," as Jesus says.

LESSON IV.

Sanctifying Grace.

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) What is sanctifying grace? L. X, Q. 105.
- 2) Why is sanctifying grace called a *gratuitous* gift of God? (Deharbe)
- 3) When does the sinner receive sanctifying grace for the first time? (Deharbe)
- 4) How long does sanctifying grace remain in the soul? (Deharbe)
- 5) How does the sinner receive grace again after Baptism? (Deharbe)
- 6) How many kinds of grace are there? L. X, Q. 104.

Preparation. Dear children, the good thief is a miracle of grace. In him we see very well the working of actual grace. How did grace work in his soul?—How did he come to recognize his condition and be converted?—Without the grace of the Holy Ghost the sinner would most certainly have died in his sins. Is actual grace necessary for us?—Now the good thief is in Heaven a long time already; but he must say forever: "By the grace of God I am what I am". To whom does God give His grace?—But grace alone does not do all things. What must man do?—Grace alone could not have saved the sinner; for man can do what he wills. Can man also resist the grace of God?—

(Question the pupils a little more in detail on the preceding lesson.)

The good thief opened his heart to grace. Then Christ spoke the great words: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise!" What happened at that moment?—His soul was made pure from sin and became holy for Heaven. The grace of the Holy Ghost did that: therefore it is called *the grace, that makes holy*, or *sanctifying grace*. Sanctifying grace is a very precious gift of God. Eternal life is attached to it.

Aim. I am going to explain that to you a little better today: *how beautiful the soul becomes through sanctifying grace, and how carefully you ought to preserve that gift of Heaven*. When did you receive sanctifying grace?—

Presentation. When you came into this world, you were all heathen children. A hateful, filthy stain was on your soul, original sin. The good God looked down upon you and said: I have no use for a child like that in Heaven! Your good parents knew that very well. They were solicitous for your life and neither did they want to have a heathen child in their home. Therefore soon they brought you to church for Holy Baptism. Now while the priest poured the baptismal water over your head and spoke at the same time the words of Baptism, something wonderful occurred in your soul: The Holy Ghost washed the shameful blemish of sin away from your soul with the Blood of Jesus Christ; and then He clothed the soul with the precious heavenly garment of sanctifying grace. Now the soul suddenly became heavenly beautiful. God, the Father, in Heaven looked down upon you with pleasure and said to His Angels: Behold My dear child! And He commanded the Guardian Angel: Take good care of My child and protect it in all its ways and bring it back to Me into Heaven! Then they carried you home again and your parents were very happy; for their child was no longer a heathen child, but rather a child of God, and Heaven was open to it.

Then gradually you grew up. But little by little the weeds of sin also sprang up within you: you committed sins, perhaps even mortal sins. With detestation God turned His face away from you and Heaven was closed against you. But thanks be to God! that it is still possible to help the poor sinner. You were allowed to go to First Holy Confession. There your soul was purified and made holy a second time; you recovered the lost grace. And if one of you were to fall deeply again, you can again arise in the Sacrament of Penance. But woe to you! if you were to die without sanctifying grace. To such a one Jesus would say: "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?" And He would cast you out into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Explanation. 1. When a child comes into this world, it is only a child of man and not yet a child of God. Why?—Every child has original sin on its soul, a wicked inheritance from our first parents. Because God detests all evil, therefore neither can He have any use for such a child in Heaven. Such a sinful child could not look at God at all; for it is still blind in its soul. Yes, the poor child would not even want to remain in Heaven; for it would have to feel ashamed at appearing there among the Angels and Saints so unclean and filthy in soul. Once all of you were such poor children. But what happened?—At the moment of Holy Baptism your soul was made pure and holy. Now you were no longer sinners, but just and holy in God's sight, just and holy for Heaven. God was pleased with you. If you had died immediately after Baptism, you would be in Heaven a long time already and you would no longer have a desire for earth. Sanctifying grace did that: sanctifying grace is that grace, which makes the soul holy and pleasing to God. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis*).

2. But sanctifying grace does even more than that. A newly-born child lives and yet, it is dead—dead for God and for Heaven. Only at Baptism does it begin to live for God and for Heaven. Before Baptism you all were sinners; but in Baptism you were made children of God. The dear Lord saw His image and likeness shining in your soul. No wonder, then, that He said to His Angels: Behold My child! What a dignity to be a child of God! What a love of God! St. John once said so very beautifully: “Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God” (I John iii, 1). Sanctifying grace does that also: *it makes from us sinners children of God.* (Repeat together; use the blackboard).

3. When a child comes into this world, it is born only for the earth; but in Holy Baptism it is born for Heaven. For the child receives an entirely new life, the life of grace, and that is already the beginning of eternal life. You know, that children inherit the possessions of their father. God’s children will inherit some day the kingdom of their Father, Heaven. St. Paul says that expressly: “If we are sons of God, then we are heirs also of God indeed” (Rom. viii, 17). Who can understand that?—One day to see God forever and to adore Him with the Angels and Saints! We cannot grasp that at all. Thus too does St. John say: “We are now sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared, what we shall be. We shall see Him as He is” (I John iii, 2). Sanctifying grace does that also: *it makes us sinners heirs of Heaven.* (Repeat together; use the blackboard).

Let us say the entire answer together: *Sanctifying grace is that grace, by which from sinners we are made holy and just, pleasing to God, children of God, and heirs of Heaven.*

4. In Holy Baptism you were made from sinners just, children of God and heirs of Heaven. But to whom do you owe that?—The Holy Ghost did that. Or

did you yourselves perhaps earn grace? Why you were at that time still little helpless children. But now too you cannot earn grace. No man can do that. *Sanctifying grace is an entirely free gift of God. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).* The sinner can, of course, prepare his heart for grace by prayer and contrition and penance, but he cannot earn grace. Tell me yourselves, can a dead person still work and earn? Or can a withered tree still bring forth fruit? And if man is dead for God and Heaven, how can he then earn grace? No, *sanctifying grace is an entirely free gift of God, flowing from the compassion and love of God. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. This gift of grace you have all received from God in Holy Baptism. Before that you were sinners, after that children of grace. *The sinner receives sanctifying grace in the Sacrament of Baptism. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Thereby man becomes justified, that is, right before God and ready for Heaven.—But I wonder whether you have all preserved sanctifying grace? Only *one* mortal sin and grace is lost, the love of God is lost, Heaven is lost. Can there be any greater misfortune? 6. *Sanctifying grace remains in the soul of the justified, as long as he does not commit mortal sin. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).* I am afraid, that very many of you have already lost grace. In that case much is lost, but all is not yet lost. Where did you get grace again? 7. *After Baptism the sinner receives grace again in the Sacrament of Penance. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Thanks be to God, that we have the Sacrament of Penance! You know how lovingly the father received the prodigal son and how he had the most beautiful garment put upon him. Thus does the heavenly Father do to us, poor sinners, if we return to Him in true sorrow! He gives to us the most beautiful garment—sanctifying grace.

8. Now you know how many kinds of grace there

are. One kind helps us to do good and avoid evil—actual grace; the other makes us holy and just, children of God and heirs of Heaven—sanctifying grace. There are two kinds of grace, sanctifying grace and actual grace. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Write on the blackboard:

Sanctifying grace:

1. Makes from us sinners—just, holy and pleasing to God; children of God, heirs of Heaven.
2. A free gift of God's compassion and love.
3. First in Baptism—then in Penance. (5)
4. In the soul—as long as there is no mortal sin.
6. Kinds of grace—sanctifying and actual.

Synthesis. There is a helping grace and a state of grace (a passing grace, and a lasting grace)—namely actual grace and sanctifying grace. Tell me once more: How does actual grace work in the soul?—How does sanctifying grace work in the soul?—From whom does sanctifying grace come?—What therefore is sanctifying grace?—By this grace man becomes justified; therefore it is also called the grace of justification. Why is sanctifying grace called a “gratuitous” or free gift?—When does the sinner receive grace?—How long does grace remain in the soul?—How many kinds of grace are there?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class*).

Application. 1. All of you have already seen a grape vine. Jesus once spoke a beautiful parable concerning that: “I am the vine and you are the branches”. Do you understand what He means?—Just as the branch is most intimately connected with the vine, so we are very closely united with Jesus through sanctifying grace. His life is, as it were, our life; Jesus lives in us and we live in Jesus. Thus does St. Paul say: “I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me”.

Do you now understand, at least a little, how precious sanctifying grace is? Nothing in the world is like or equal to it. Whoever has grace, has everything, even though otherwise he lacks everything; he is rich, even though he is ever so poor. For his heart is a little kingdom of Heaven, in which God Himself lives.

2. Sanctifying grace makes the soul wonderfully beautiful. Once St. Catherine of Siena was meditating on the love of Jesus for us poor sinners. She was deeply moved; for she could not understand how Jesus could suffer and do so much for us poor creatures. Then the Saviour appeared to her and showed her the beauty of a soul in sanctifying grace and said: "Behold! was it not worth while to live and to suffer and to die for such a beautiful thing?" Therefore so great is sanctifying grace in the eyes of Jesus.

3. Is sanctifying grace so valuable to you also? Or have you perhaps thrown away this precious gift of God into the filth of sin? If so, you have lost more than a fortune, yes, more than a kingdom; for you have thrown away the kingdom of Heaven and God Himself. Without the heavenly garment of grace you may never appear in the sight of God; for otherwise He would cast you out with the words: "Depart from Me! I know you not". But if you remain in God's grace, you are God's children; full of confidence you may lift up your hands and heart to God and say: "Our Father!" And the Father in Heaven looks down upon you lovingly and says: "My dear children!"

LESSON V.

Meritorious Works.

(Supplementary)

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) What fruits does the justified man produce with the help of grace? (Deharbe)
- 2) What do we merit by the good works which we perform in the state of grace? (Deharbe)
- 3) Cannot a man who is in mortal sin do good? (Deharbe)
- 4) Is, then, the good done in mortal sin useless? (Deharbe)
- 5) Is every Christian bound to do good works? (Deharbe)
- 6) What good works are especially recommended in Holy Scripture? (Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, if we are in grace, we are branches of the true vine, entirely one with Christ. You have already heard that. Let us review it briefly. (*Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson*).—

In the parable of the vine and the branches Jesus says further: "He that remaineth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Who can explain those words?—If we remain in Jesus through sanctifying grace, we shall bring forth many fruits for Heaven; we shall become rich in merits. That is an important truth for life. But you do not perhaps understand that fully.

Aim. I am going to explain that to you a little better: *What we merit with God, if we are in grace.* I am going to show you that from the life of two brothers: one was a true child of God—St. Stanislaus Kostka, the other was a real child of the world—his older brother Paul.

Presentation. Both brothers were sent by their parents to Vienna to study. Stanislaus was a pious boy. To pray was his joy. Often he went into the neighboring church, knelt down there in some quiet place and prayed as fervently as an Angel. Each day he assisted at Holy Mass; every Sunday and holyday of obligation he received Holy Communion. Before going to school, each time he first paid a visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and prayed for blessing upon his studies. The little Saint also liked to fast, denied himself many a pleasure and gave the poor alms for love of Jesus. Thus his young heart bloomed like a rose in holy love of God.

His brother Paul was entirely different. He led a free and easy life. He did not want to hear much about praying and going to church. To eat and drink, to sing and play, to keep company with careless companions, to whom religion was nothing: that was the life for him. No wonder, if the pious life of his brother was a thorn in his eye. Therefore Paul wanted to "convert" his brother at any cost. But all his talk and flattery were in vain. Stanislaus always answered in these simple words: "I was not born for this world; but for Heaven; therefore I will live as God wants me to live"! Paul became very bitter against his brother for that. Now he let his good brother feel his anger. He insulted him, ridiculed him, maltreated him, yes he threw him upon the ground and even kicked him. That continued for nearly two years. And Stanislaus? Do you suppose, that he repaid evil with evil? No, he bore it all patiently and quietly without speaking a word of complaint, without telling his parents about it. Never did he show his impatience, but only love towards his brother. He arranged Paul's room, cleaned his clothing and shoes and did the lowest duties for him just as a servant; but he would not allow himself to be turned away from his pious life.

This continuous ill-treatment did much towards mak-

ing Stanislaus very ill. Soon his life's strength was consumed. With glowing devotion he received Jesus once more in the Blessed Sacrament. All who were present had to weep, so deeply were they moved. They asked him, whether he was ready to die according to God's will. Joyfully he answered: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready!" Then he went quietly to sleep, to awaken in eternity. The Saint was only eighteen years old. Later on his brother, Paul, entered into himself and led a pious and Christian life.

Explanation. 1. Jesus once said: Every *good tree bringeth forth good fruits*" (Matt. vii, 17). Little Stanislaus was a good tree in the garden of God, for he was a child of God's grace. What fruits did he bring forth with the grace of God?—All his prayers and attendance at Holy Mass, all his Communions and visits to the Blessed Sacrament, all his fasts and almsgiving, all his patient enduring and courage—all these things were good fruits. God was pleased with them and the holy Angels wrote them all down in the book of eternal life. For all that he earned for himself a rich heavenly reward. Such good works, that are of value for Heaven, are therefore called *meritorious works*. Let us remember: *The justified man produces by the help of grace good—that is, meritorious—works; for "every good tree bringeth forth good fruits"* (Matt. vii. 17). (Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).

2. Paul only ridiculed and insulted his brother Stanislaus because of his good works. But how could he be so malicious? He imagined, of course, like all worldlings: One is young only once and one lives only once; therefore one must sow one's wild oats. But what did he earn thereby?—Stanislaus would not allow himself to be "converted", but rather continued in his pious life. Thus his soul from day to day became more beautiful and holy in the eyes of God. By each good work sanctifying grace was increased. Grace is in

the soul like a light, that can flare up into a mighty flame. Therefore we ought to be tireless in good. *By the good works which we perform in the state of grace, we merit an increase in sanctifying grace. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—But that is not yet all. Stanislaus also ascended each day a step higher in Heaven; by each good deed he became richer in God's sight. For the more grace there is in the soul, the greater the glory in Heaven. *By the good works which we perform in the state of grace we also merit eternal salvation. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Now tell me yourselves: which of the two brothers was wise in a Christian sense? What is worth more: the little filthy pleasure of earth or the eternal happiness of Heaven?

3. Now let us look at Paul. He did not live in the state of grace, but rather in disfavor with God; for he led a careless life of sin and was very unkind and heartless towards his brother Stanislaus. Paul was not indeed absolutely unchristian. He continued to pray at times and also went now and then to church and oftentimes did little works of mercy to others. Those were good works, and surely God was pleased with them. But why could not God be fully pleased with them?—These good works were not meritorious, but rather dead works. Without grace there is no merit for Heaven. *A man in mortal sin can do good, but without any merit for Heaven. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).* But why do these good works merit nothing for Heaven?—If a branch is cut off from the vine, can it still bring forth fruits? That is impossible, but rather it must die. Now the sinner is separated from the true vine, Christ; therefore he cannot bring forth fruits for Heaven.

4. Now a sinner might perhaps think to himself: Yes, if all that is of no value for Heaven, I will omit it altogether! What do you say to that?—Do not be so foolish! If God does not give you a heavenly reward for that, He will at least give you an earthly re-

ward. But more than that. Later on Paul felt sorry for his sinful life and became converted and died a happy death. You may be surprised at that. Why was God merciful to him?—Most likely he owed that especially to the prayers of his brother Stanislaus in Heaven. But surely his own good works also had a share in that. Was not that a rich reward, the grace of conversion?—Then too, most likely, God many a time omitted punishing Paul through sickness and misfortune because of his good works. You see, that good performed in the state of mortal sin is not entirely useless. *Good done in mortal sin is, on the contrary, very useful to obtain from the Divine mercy the grace of conversion, sometimes also the averting of temporal punishments.* (Repeat together; use the blackboard).

5. Stanislaus was a good tree, that brought forth good fruits; but Paul was a bad tree, that brought forth bad fruits. What does one do with a tree, that brings forth only bad or even no fruits at all? We chop it down, do we not, and cast it into the fire? So too will God do with a Christian, that does not bring forth good deeds. Jesus Himself said so: "Every tree, that bringeth forth not good fruit, is cut down and cast into the fire" (Matt. iii, 10). Thus also would it have been done to Paul some day; but the poor sinner was converted and that was his good fortune and his salvation. Must therefore a Christian perform good works? Yes, for "*every tree that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire*" (Matt. iii, 10). (Repeat together; use the blackboard). But the good tree God some day will take away from earth and plant it in the heavenly Paradise.

6. But what kinds of good fruit ought a Christian especially to bring forth? You see that in the life of St. Stanislaus. He was full of zeal in prayer, in attendance at church and Holy Communion: all those things are *works of devotion*. He was strict in fasting; but not merely in regard to food and drink, but also in regard to seeing and hearing and talking: all

those things are *works of mortification*. He loved to give alms, did little deeds of kindness and mercy to his brother and helped generally, wherever he was able to help: all those things are *works of Christian mercy*. God Himself recommends those works to us in the Holy Scriptures. Through the Archangel Raphael He tells Tobias and us all: "Prayer and fasting and almsgiving, is better than all the treasures" (Tobias xii, 8). Do you know why?—A person may indeed be a good king, he can, nevertheless, not take a single penny with him into eternity; but some day the good works we perform will be intercessors with God for us. Let us remember: *In the Holy Scriptures are especially recommended to us prayer, fasting, and alms; by which, in general, are understood the works of devotion, mortification, and charity. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Good tree—good fruits—meritorious works.
2. Through good works in grace:
 - a) increase of grace;
 - b) eternal salvation.
3. Good works without grace—without merit.
4. Good works without grace—conversion, averting of temporal punishments.
5. Good works—a Christian's duty ("Every tree" etc.)
6. Good works—prayer, fasting, almsgiving—works of devotion, mortification, charity.

Synthesis. Now let us put the whole doctrine concerning meritorious works briefly together. Man in the state of grace brings forth good fruits, that is, meritorious works; "for every good tree bringeth forth good fruits". By good works performed in the state of grace we merit: 1) an increase of sanctifying grace; 2) eternal salvation. Man can also do good in the state of mortal sin, but without any merit

for Heaven. However the good is not useless, or without value, but rather it is very useful to obtain from the Divine mercy the grace of conversion and sometimes also temporal punishments are averted. Every Christian must perform good works; for "every tree that doth not yield fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire". In Holy Scripture are recommended to us especially prayer, fasting and almsgiving, that is, works of devotion, mortification and charity. (*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class. The last two answers may be reserved for memorizing for a later class*).

Application. 1. For a good work sanctifying grace is required. Here are two children: one is in grace, the other in sin; one is a good tree, the other a bad tree. Both of them go to Holy Mass on a Sunday, both observe the Friday abstinence, both give an alms for the heathen children. These are three good works. The two children have done the same things and yet, they have not done the same things. What did the child in grace merit for itself?—What does the child in sin receive?—

2. There are many people, who for many years no longer receive the Holy Sacraments. But they have a good heart and give many alms to the poor. Now their end approaches. They are sorry for their sins, sincerely confess their wicked life and die in the state of grace and go to Heaven through Purgatory. On the last day we shall be surprised at that. Who can explain it?—God gave them as a reward for their good works the grace of conversion.

3. Without grace there is no merit for Heaven. Children, do you now know, why I so often admonish you: Only no mortal sin! Without grace we are as poor as beggars in God's sight, with grace we can become infinitely rich for Heaven. Would you like some day to appear before God with empty hands? If not,

preserve grace in your hearts like a precious jewel. But also co-operate with grace! As the labor, so the reward; as the sowing, so the harvest.

LESSON VI.

The Good Intention.

(Supplementary)

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) What does God especially regard in our works? (Deharbe)
- 2) What is a good intention? (Deharbe)
- 3) How may we make a good intention? (Deharbe)
- 4) When should we make a good intention? (Deharbe)

—Preparation. Dear children, Peter and the other Apostles were once busy fishing. But all their efforts were fruitless; not a single little fish entered their nets. Then Jesus commanded: "Ride out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught". Simon answered Him: "Master, we have labored the whole night and have taken nothing". Thus too must the sinner complain: "Master, I have labored and have taken nothing!" You know: Without sanctifying grace there is no merit for Heaven! Let us review that. (*Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson.*)

For a good work sanctifying grace is necessary. But grace alone is not yet enough. Whoever is in the service of a master, must work for his master, or employer; only then will he also receive the merited reward. We Christians are in the service of the highest Lord; therefore we must work for God; only then will God some day give us the merited heavenly reward. For that we say: We must have *the good intention*

in all our actions, only then are they of value in God's eyes.

Aim. I am going to show you that today a little better: *how a Christian ought to do everything for love of God.*

Presentation. There was a hermit, who complained day and night and grieved, saying: "Oh! how shall I be saved? If only I knew, what I poor man ought to do, that God may be satisfied with me and that I may save my soul"! Then an Angel appeared to him and invited him, saying: "Come with me!" They started on the way and came to a simple, little house. A poorly clothed girl was cleaning the room. Very joyfully she sang a little song at her work:

"Lord, all for love of Thee!
Lord, what I do and dare,
Be to Thee consecrated
For time and eternity".

Both of them remained standing for a few moments and listened; then they went on farther. The path led them into the city. They entered into a great, stately cathedral. A renowned preacher was just announcing the word of God. A great crowd of people were gathered around the pulpit. Attentively they listened to the beautiful words; many were moved to tears. Now the sermon was over.

The priest left the house of God and passed by both of the strangers, without looking at them. One could see from his features that he was not a little conceited, because he was able to speak so beautifully and touchingly. Then the Angel said to the hermit: "Tell me, my friend, who has now done more in God's sight: the poor girl or the renowned preacher?" Without reflecting the hermit answered: "Why the priest, of course!" The Angel answered: "You are very much mistaken, my son; for God looks above all things to the good intention. Through it, all that we do becomes

pleasing to God; but we ourselves become happy. Write that in your heart. Live according to that and act according to that, and then do not worry about your eternal salvation!"

Explanation. 1. If I were to ask you: Who has more merit with God, the priest or the poor girl? you also would say—the priest. But what did the Angel say to the hermit?—Yes, God looks less upon the deed than upon the heart. *God especially regards in our good works our good intention. (Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* With what intention did the girl perform her work?—The beautiful song tells us that: "Lord, all for love of Thee!" The good child only wanted to serve God and to honor Him. Therefore her work was a service of God. Here the old proverb holds good: "The hand at work, the heart with God". Do you see? That is a *good intention: the purpose or positive act of the will to serve God and to honor Him. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Did the renowned preacher also have the intention of serving and honoring God? One would indeed imagine, that a priest does all for the love of God; but no, that preacher wanted to please men more than God. Therefore he did not have a good intention, but rather a wrong intention. Of him the words of the Lord are true: "Amen, I say to thee, thou hast already received thy reward!" Or can God perhaps reward what a person does not do at all for God? Where there is no work for God, there neither is there any reward from God. And if a person does only half for God, and half for himself, the rule holds good: half work—half reward!

2. The work of the girl, cleaning the house, was only a little house-work after all. You imagine, perhaps, that a little work like that is not worth much in God's sight. But you judge wrongly. If I write three noughts on the blackboard; they are not worth any-

thing. But if I place a one before them, at once they become of value. If I do not perform a task for the love of God, it has no value at all; but if I first make a good intention, like the poor girl of our story, the work becomes a service of God and will bring me a great, heavenly reward. You see, then, how by means of a good intention even ordinary things become valuable in the eyes of God. Therefore St. Paul admonishes the Christians: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God" (I Cor. x, 31). But how can one eat and drink for the glory of God? Why not? One cannot indeed eat and drink intemperately for the honor of God; for that would be a sin. But while eating and drinking I think to myself: God wills it. God is looking at me; then I shall be able to work again for the honor of God. That is a good intention.

3. *How can you make a good intention?* How did the girl pray in her song?—That is indeed a very beautiful and powerful saying. After your morning prayer always add: "O my God, I offer all to Thee." Or you might say: "All for the honor of God." Another form is: "My God and my Lord! All for Thy honor." That can easily be understood.—All my thoughts, all my desires, all my speech, all my acts, all my suffering—all for God! St. Ignatius made use of the beautiful motto: "All for the greater honor and glory of God!" Many people say before work: "In God's name!" That is also perfectly proper and beautiful. (*Have the pupils repeat together these formulas.*)

But, *when ought you to make a good intention?*—The girl did it at her work. That pleases the good God. We ought to make it especially mornings and offer the day's work to the dear Lord and God. But also during the day we ought at times to turn our thoughts for a few moments to God and renew our good intention. That is not indeed a duty of conscience, but it is good advice. 4. *It is very useful to*

make the good intention several times a day, and especially every morning. (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)

Write on the blackboard:

1. In good works God looks especially at—the good intention.
2. Good intention—the purpose, or positive act of the will, to serve and honor God.
3. Good intention: when?—a) every morning, b) often in day.

Synthesis. Two things belong to a good work: sanctifying grace and a good intention; only then has the work a value in God's eyes and for Heaven. To what does God look especially in our works?—What is a good intention?—How can you make a short good intention?—When should you make a good intention?—*(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. In a good work God looks especially at the good intention.—a) Once Jesus went with His disciples into the temple. He seated Himself near the box into which the offerings were placed. He watched the people as they put in their alms. Many rich Jews cast much money into the box. Finally, there came also a poor widow and offered two mites; therefore only a few pennies. Jesus said to His disciples: "This poor widow has put in more than all the others. For they all have given of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, has given all that she has, even her whole living!" Do you see? God does not look at the gift, but rather at the giver, not upon the good work, but rather upon the good intention. The rich Jews wanted to be seen by the people, but the poor widow gave only for love of God.

b) A Pharisee and a publican once went into the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood up, and began to

pray like this: "O God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men."—But the publican stood afar off and did not so much as raise his eyes to Heaven, but struck his breast contritely and said: "O God! be merciful to me, a sinner." Therefore also Jesus said: "This man went down to his house justified rather than that man."

2. By means of a good intention everything may be converted into gold for Heaven.—a) The saintly Archbishop Charles Borromeo once had a game with several of his friends. One of them asked him: "What would you do, if some one were to say to you: You must die in half an hour?" What would you do?—But the Saint said: "I would quietly continue my game; for I am playing for the love of God. But I do not desire anything else except to die, while doing something for the love of God!"

b) A remarkable story is told of a pious religious in a convent. He was a tailor and was about to die. Then he begged of his brethren who were standing about his death-bed: "Bring me my key to Heaven!" They look at one another, saying: "What does he want? His key to Heaven!" "Yes, bring me my key to Heaven!" Finally they guessed what he meant, and brought him his sewing needle. Now the dying religious was satisfied. But really that is a remarkable key to Heaven, is it not?—Who can solve the riddle?—That pious brother made every stitch for love of God, all for the great honor and glory of God.—You do the same. To sew, to darn, to clean, to read, to write, to figure: you can do all for love of God. Then you are performing the entire day a service of God and all is being written down in Heaven.

3. Begin every day with God. Upon awakening in the morning take Holy Water at once, raise your heart to God and say devoutly: "My God and my Lord, all for Thy honor and glory!" When in school you begin to study, say first quietly: "In God's name!" Before eating or playing you might say: "All for God's honor!"

Do everything for God! Do nothing simply to be seen or praised or rewarded! Jesus Himself warns us against that: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father, Who is in Heaven" (Matt. vi, 1).—Let us close this class with a good intention!—(*Make a good intention together.*)

II.
PRAYER.

LESSON VII.

The Kinds of Prayer.**Catechetical Unit:**

1) Is there any other means of obtaining God's grace than the Sacraments? L. XXVIII, Q. 303.

2) Which are the prayers most recommended to us? L. XXVIII, Q. 308.

3) What is prayer? L. XXVIII, Q. 304.

4) Must we always use a set form of words? (Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, the Sacraments are signs of grace or means of grace. Through them the Holy Ghost infuses His grace into our hearts. The sacramentals also are means of grace. If we use them in confidence, we also receive grace through them.—But there is another means of grace. You all know it and we need it for Heaven—Prayer. 1. Our Catechism says: **There is another means of obtaining grace, and it is prayer.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.*) St. Augustine once said: "He that knows how to pray well, also knows how to live well." And I would add: he also knows how to die well. And everything depends upon that; for as we die, so we remain for all eternity. Do you see how important prayer is for a Christian life? You can all pray. But I wonder, whether you all know how to pray well? Therefore I must instruct you better concerning prayer.

What prayers do you know by heart?—What daily prayers do you know?—What Mass prayers?—What prayers to the Blessed Virgin? — to the Guardian Angel?—What indulgenced prayers?—What ejaculations?—What do you mean by the Lord's Prayer?—By the Apostles' Creed?—By the Confiteor?—Our Catechism says: 2. **The prayers most recommended to us are the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles'**

Creed, the Confiteor, and the Acts of Faith, Hope, Love, and Contrition. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

Now if you look at the contents of these prayers, you will see at once: the contents of our prayers are entirely different..

Aim. That is what I am going to show you first: *the contents or the kinds of prayer.*—I know a prayer, in which the kinds of prayer are briefly contained—it is the the Gloria in excelsis Deo of the Mass. First I am going to say this prayer for you.

Presentation. The Gloria is added immediately after the Kyrie eleison. The priest lifts his eyes and hands to Heaven and prays: “Glory be to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee; we bless Thee; we adore Thee; we glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers: Thou Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou only art holy: Thou only art the Lord: Thou only, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God, the Father. Amen.”

Explanation. 1. Just as soon as the priest intones the Gloria, he lifts his eyes and hands heavenwards. That evidently has a meaning. What might it signify? —It is a sign, that he raises his mind and his heart to Heaven, to God. Prayer is the lifting of our minds and hearts to God. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) While the mouth speaks the sacred words, the heart is with God. Did you ever watch a lark? This bird lifts itself high up into the sky and sings at the same time its glorious song, just as though it wanted to sing to God and to adore Him. Thus also does our heart lift itself

to God at prayer; we think piously of God and speak with devotion to Him. While entertaining ourselves well with some one, we forget everything else. So while praying we ought also to forget all earthly things; the heart should speak to God. To pray, then, means to think piously of God and to speak with Him.

2. Now let us look a little more closely at the Gloria. The priest begins: "Glory be to God in the highest!" Then he says: "We praise Thee; we bless Thee; we adore Thee; we glorify Thee!" When the priest speaks like that, he rejoices with God, because God is God, because God is so great and so beautiful and so holy. What kind of a prayer is that?—It is a prayer of praise and adoration. We are glad and rejoice over the infinite perfections of God and adore and glorify Him on that account. We lift our minds and hearts to God: to adore Him. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)—Then the Gloria continues: "We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory!" How is that meant?—God's glory is really our happiness. All the wonderful things of this world in the sky, on the earth, in the waters,—all that Jesus has done by His life and death and glorious resurrection, all that God does through the Church—all these things are for the greater honor and glory of God. But at the same time all these things are for us, for our benefit, to make us happy for time and for eternity. We thank God for that with all our heart. What kind of a prayer is that?—It is a prayer of thanksgiving. We lift our minds and hearts to God: to thank Him for His benefits. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)—Further on in the Gloria the priest says: "O Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us!" And again: "Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers!" And for the third time: "Who sitteth at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us!" Three times in succession the priest begs for pardon for his sins and the sins of all the people. He also begs God to hear our prayers and

grant us all the graces we need for body and soul. What kind of a prayer is that?—It is a prayer of petition. We lift our minds and hearts to God: to ask His forgiveness, and to beg of Him all the graces we need, whether for soul or body. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

You see, therefore, that there is a threefold prayer: a prayer of praise, of thanksgiving and of petition. Let us say the entire answer of the Catechism together: Prayer is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God to adore Him, to thank Him for His benefits, to ask His forgiveness, and to beg of Him all the graces we need, whether for soul or body.

3. The priest prays the Gloria at Holy Mass with his mouth and lips; therefore it is a prayer of the mouth, or voice—*vocal prayer*. The heart, of course, must also be with the prayer; a mere prayer of the lips would not be worth anything. For God does not look upon the lips, but rather at the heart. But how else can I pray the Gloria?—In spirit I go to Bethlehem and look at the Christ Child in the crib. I kneel down next to Mary and Joseph and with the pious shepherds. I hear the Angels sing: “Glory be to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will!” I look at this beautiful picture for a few moments attentively; then I make an act of Faith and excite myself to pious feelings: “Dear Christ Child, I believe that Thou art the Divine Child. How glad I am, that Thou hast come from Heaven to earth! But why art Thou so poor and so weak? Thou didst want to live and suffer and die for my sins. O Child Jesus! I thank Thee for Thy love. But never again will I hurt Thee by my sins. Give me Thy blessing!”—Such a prayer, in which I consider or meditate upon a truth of Faith and at the same time awaken pious feelings in my heart, is called interior or *mental prayer, meditation*.—*We must not always use a set form of words in our prayers. This is done in Vocal Prayer only; but there is also an Interior or Mental Prayer, called Medi-*

tation. (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)—Mental Prayer, or Meditation, is much better than Vocal Prayer; but it is also more difficult and must be learned and practised. Just try it some time!

Write on the blackboard:

1. Means of grace: Sacraments, sacramentals and Prayer.
2. Prayers most recommended by Church: Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Apostles' Creed, Confiteor, Acts of Faith, Hope, Love, Contrition.
3. Prayer—lifting mind and heart to God—to adore or praise, to thank, to beg forgiveness, to ask for all grace for soul and body.
4. Vocal and Mental Prayer.

Synthesis. Let us repeat the points, which we have learned today. Is there any other means of grace besides the Sacraments and the sacramentals?—Which prayers does the Church recommend most of all?—What is prayer?—What do we do at prayer?—How can we distinguish prayer as regards the form?—What is vocal prayer?—Mental prayer, or meditation?—Why is interior, or mental prayer, better than vocal prayer? (*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and the blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class.*)

Application. 1. To pray means to lift the mind and heart to God. A pious man says: "Prayer is like a heavenly ladder, which reaches down from Heaven to earth, and the Angels continually ascend and descend." What does he mean by that?—The Angels carry our prayers to God's throne and bring us God's graces. Another one has said: "Prayer is the breathing of the soul." How is that to be understood?—At prayer the soul breathes pious thoughts to God and breathes in God's graces in return. By this breathing the soul becomes strong and fresh.

2. There is a prayer of adoration, or praise, of thanksgiving, and of petition.—Tell me some *prayers of praise, or adoration!*—The Angels in Heaven sing: “Holy, holy, holy, art Thou Lord God of hosts!” The three youths in the fiery furnace of Babylon sang a glorious song of praise and adoration: “Praise the Lord all ye works of the Lord; praise and extol Him in eternity!” When Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, she intoned the Magnificat: “My soul doth magnify the Lord!” Zachary praised God at the birth of John the Baptist: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the salvation of His people!” The Christian salutation: “Praised be Jesus Christ!” is a prayer of praise and adoration. “Blessed and praised every moment, be the most holy and divine Sacrament!” “Glory be to the Father!” etc. “Holy God, we praise Thy Name!”

Do you also know any *prayers of thanksgiving?*—In your morning prayers you say: “O my God and Father! I thank Thee with all my heart!” In your evening prayers you say: “O God! at the end of this day, I again lift up my heart to Thee and thank Thee for all Thy graces and benefits!” After meals you say: “We give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits, O almighty God!” After Holy Communion you thank Jesus from your heart for His heavenly gift. On Fridays we pray: “I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast died for me!”

Tell me also some *prayers of petition.*—For what do we pray in the morning?—In the evening?—Before meals?—Before holy Confession we pray: “Come, O Holy Ghost, and enlighten me!” The Our Father especially is a prayer of petition. “Soul of Christ, sanctify me!” Most of the ejaculations are prayers of petition. “My Jesus, mercy!” “Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me!” “Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!”

3. Many people imagine, that they are doing wonders for the dear Lord, when they pray. That is a

foolish imagination. God does not need our prayers, but we need the good God and His graces. If a person is allowed to go to the Holy Father, or may speak to the President, we say: "He has been granted an audience!" Every one considers that a great honor and favor. But see, when we pray, we are allowed to speak with God; He grants us an audience. Is not that a favor? Ought we not to do that very frequently? We may do that at any hour; He always gladly listens to us. And if we like to pray now, some day we shall be permitted to adore God forever with the Angels. You all want to be in the company of the Angels some day, do you not?

LESSON VIII.

The Qualities of Prayer.

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) How should we pray? L. XXVIII, Q. 307.
- 2) What should we do in order that we may be less distracted in our prayers? (Deharbe)
- 3) Are prayers said with distractions of any avail? L. XXVIII, Q. 309.

Preparation. Dear children, to pray is a great honor; for we may do what the Angels of Heaven do. We saw that in the last class; let us first review it. (*Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson.*) But there is a great difference between prayer and prayer. Some one has said: "Our prayer can be gold or silver or straw." Do you know what he means?—To pray is an art. Every art must be practised. He that wants to be an artist must practise each day. For practise makes perfect. You all would like to learn how to pray, so that some day you may be able to enter Heaven.

Aim. I am going to show you that today: *How ought you to pray?* The best thing to do is to go to school to Him, Who was a Master of prayer—Jesus Christ. He is to be our Teacher of prayer today.

Presentation. Let us consider the Divine Saviour at prayer. It is the night of the Lord's Passion. Kindly the moon pours forth its silver light over the Garden of Olives. Let us enter in spirit. Into this garden Jesus comes with His disciples. Then He said to them: "Stay here, while I go yonder and pray!" Then He took Peter and James and John with Him and began to grow sad and to tremble. He complains: "My soul is sorrowful unto death. Remain here and watch with Me! Pray, lest you fall into temptation." Thereupon He went forward a stone's throw, knelt down, fell upon His face and prayed: "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me. But yet, not My will, but Thine be done!" After a while He arose, came to His disciples and found them asleep from sadness. Then Jesus went back into the garden for a second time and prayed: "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done!" He came a second time to His disciples and found them again sleeping. Once more Jesus returned to His former place under the olive trees and prayed for the third time more fervently than before. Now a real death agony laid hold of Him. His sweat was like drops of blood, that flowed to the earth. But suddenly it seemed as though a bright, heavenly ray of light was shining through the night: The heavenly Father had sent an Angel to strengthen Jesus in His agony. (*Show the pupils a large picture of this scene.*)

Explanation. 1. Just look at the praying Saviour! How does He pray?—Jesus is thinking only of God; His Heart is speaking with His heavenly Father. Jesus is thinking only of what His mouth speaks, and His Heart feels the same thing. To pray from the heart, is to pray *with devotion*. — But why is the Saviour alone? The presence of the disciples would

only disturb and distract the Saviour. Again and again other things would keep entering into His mind: how the disciples will grieve this night and become unfaithful to Him. But Jesus wants to avoid all distracting thoughts. To avoid all distracting thoughts as much as possible, is to pray *with attention*. Thus we too ought to pray. Of course, to keep away all distracting thoughts, that we poor mortals cannot always do; but we ought, at least, to do what is in our power. Remember, then, that our prayer ought to come from the heart and we ought to avoid all distracting thoughts, as much as possible. That is the first quality of our prayer: we should pray with devotion and attention. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.*)

2. But how can we do that?—What ought we to do, in order that we may have fewer distractions?—Already on the way to the Garden of Olives Jesus had put away all worldly thoughts. Then He looked at God with the eyes of His soul and began to pray. We also ought to prepare ourselves like that. Other thoughts like to be in our mind—thoughts of eating and drinking and playing. These thoughts we ought to put out of our mind, as far as possible. But at the same time we should imagine as vividly as we can: The omnipresent God is here! He is looking at me and listening to me! I may speak with Him. I am going to do as well as I can. Thus a prayer becomes a devout and an attentive prayer.—*Before our prayer we should, as far as possible, banish all worldly thoughts, and represent the omnipresent God in a lively manner to our mind. (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

3. Whoever begins to pray thoughtlessly, is very irreverent to God. Neither can such a person hope that his prayers will be heard by God. Just represent to yourselves a child, that is allowed at Holy Confirmation to recite some verses before the Bishop. But that child merely rattles off its piece and at the same time

looks all around, not thinking at all of what it is saying. What will the Bishop think of such a child?—Will not that offend God, if a person says his prayers without thinking of what he is saying? That is tempting God. Therefore the word of God says: “Before prayer prepare your soul, and be not as a person that tempteth God” (Eccl. xviii, 23). Our Catechism says: **Prayers said with wilful distractions are of no avail.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

4. Let us look again at the praying Saviour. In what attitude is he praying?—He kneels and bows His face to the earth; thus does He pray. What does His entire attitude tell you?—Jesus wishes to humble Himself before His heavenly Father: Father, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst hear my prayer! We too must be humble at prayer. We ought to think: O God! Thou art so great and mighty and I am so little and weak. O God! Thou art so holy and I am so sinful. O God! Thou art all and I am as nothing before Thee. I am not at all worthy even to look up to Thee. I do not deserve Thy grace, but rather Thy punishment. We ought to acknowledge that sincerely and our hearts ought to be all filled with these sentiments.—Remember therefore: **we should pray with a sense of our own helplessness and dependence upon God.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) If we pray like that, our prayer will penetrate the clouds and rise even to the throne of God. Thus do we read in Holy Scripture: “The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds.” (Eccl. xxxv, 21).

5. Let us learn further from Christ. The Saviour sees in advance His bitter sufferings. He sees the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the nails, the cross; He sees Himself dying on the cross. A mortal fear lays hold of Him, the sweat of blood runs down over His brow and stains the ground. Jesus prays: “My Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass away from Me!” Do you hear? He cries out: “My Father!” What does this cry tell you?—He hopes firmly and

confidently, that His Father will hear Him. Of course, the chalice of suffering cannot be removed; Jesus must empty the chalice to the last drops. But immediately afterwards an Angel comes to strengthen Him. Christ's prayer is full of trust and confidence. We too must pray like that, trusting in the goodness of God. Where there is no confidence, there neither is there any help. Whoever begins to pray by thinking: "It is useless anyway!" prays entirely in vain. To be sure, as Christians we must also pray in a Christian manner; in all our prayers we should say; Grant me this, O God, if it is for Thy honor and for my salvation.—We should pray with trust in God's goodness. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) Jesus Himself has assured us of that expressly: "Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you." (John xvi, 23).

6. Jesus prayed fervently for what He wished. He did not speak to His heavenly Father in a half-hearted manner. How do you know that?—He repeated the same prayer over and over again. Each time He begged His Father with greater yearning and desire to give Him what He prayed for. Thus should our prayer also be.—We should pray with a great desire for the grace of God. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*) When you want something from your father or mother, what do you say?—You do not go to your father or mother and ask in a half-hearted way: "Please give me this!" and then let it go at that. No, you ask and ask again and beg for that thing, as though the whole world depended upon your getting it. Is not that what you do?—Do that also in your prayers to God.

7. Now let us look once more at the suffering Saviour. Jesus prays: "Father, if it is possible, let this chalice be removed from Me!" But His prayer is not heard. He prays for a second time, most probably for a whole hour—and again in vain. Then He begs for the third time even more fervently than

before. Now an Angel comes down from Heaven to strengthen and to comfort Him. Do you see? For a long time Jesus' prayer is not heard. Nevertheless the Saviour did not cease, but continued, persevered even more fervently in His prayer. That is the proper way; prayer must be persevering. Many a one begins to pray and soon ceases again, as though the Lord God must come at once, when He is called. No, like the Saviour we also must pray.—We should pray with perseverance. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

Write on the blackboard:

Our prayer must be:

- 1) devout—from the heart: attentive—without distractions;
- 2) humble—feeling our helplessness and dependence on God;
- 3) confident—trusting in God's goodness;
- 4) fervent—with a great desire for God's grace;
- 5) persevering—not ceasing, if we are not heard at once.

We should prepare for prayer — by banishing all worldly thoughts — thinking of God's presence.

Prayer with wilful distractions — of no avail.

Synthesis. The praying Saviour in the Garden of Olives is a model for us all. How was the prayer of Christ?—We also must pray: 1) with devotion and attention; 2) with humility; 3) with confidence; 4) with fervor and desire; 5) with perseverance. When do we pray with devotion?—With attention?—What ought we to do, in order to have fewer distractions?—Are prayers with wilful distractions of any avail?—When do we pray humbly?—Confidently?—Fervently?—perseveringly?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class.*)

Application. 1. *Our prayer must be devout and attentive.* How is your prayer?—Is it really a prayer

of the heart or an empty prayer of the lips?—Must not God perhaps complain also of you: “This people—this child—honors Me with the lips, but its heart is far from Me?” (Matt. xv, 8). Just listen to what St. Bernard once said: “How will God hear thy prayer, if thy own heart does not hear it?” He is right. If your prayer does not come from the heart; if you do not put aside all distracting thoughts as far as possible, how can that prayer arise to God in Heaven?

2. *Our prayer must be humble.* The Divine Saviour has given us a very clear example of this: Two men went up to the temple to pray. The one was a Pharisee, the other a publican. How was the prayer of the Pharisee?—Why was the prayer of the publican humble?—Are you also humble at prayer? Or do you perhaps even imagine, that God needs your prayer? In the sight of the dear Lord God we are all of us nothing but beggars. Surely a beggar has no reason for being proud, but every reason for being humble.

3. *Our prayer must be confident.* Just think of the Prophet Elias, of the good thief.—Confidence is the vessel, with which we draw from the mercy of God. If you have much confidence, you will draw out much; but if you have little confidence, you will receive little. If you have no confidence at all, you will not receive anything at all. “But,” thus does many a one complain, “I have confidence; why does not God hear me?” Just listen! Here is a person, who falls into the water and is at the point of drowning. Now he cries out, that some one should pull his hat out of the water. Will any one be so foolish as to save the hat and let the man drown? Thus many a one prays for blessing in earthly things—for example, for money and health—while his poor soul is going to destruction. Will God hear such a prayer?

4. *Our prayer must be fervent.* In the life of St. Macarius we read that one day he saw in a vision two monks who were saying their prayers. They were both very fervent, and seemed to keep themselves al-

ways in the presence of God, not only when they were on their knees but also when they were at work. The Saint saw coming from the lips of one of them, from time to time, as it were, flames of fire, which appeared to fly upwards to Heaven; while from the mouth of the other came forth flames as from a furnace, also reaching up to Heaven. The Saint knew from this vision, that both of these monks loved God; but he saw that the first was often thinking of other things, so that his prayer was not continual. He was not praying with fervor and great desire. But the other monk, whose heart was entirely in his prayers, was able to send up to God a constant fire of prayer. Be fervent then, dear children, always in your prayers, because the more fervently you pray, the more abundant grace will you receive, and the easier it will be for you to obtain the gift of final perseverance.

5. *Our prayers must be persevering.* St. Monica prayed for sixteen years for the conversion of her son. Then from a sinner Augustine was made a Saint. Therefore do not merely begin and then at once cease! Prayer is the only power, which can conquer God. "We ought to do as children, who do not cease until they have what they want," says St. John Chrysostom. "The farmer must wait a long time, until the seed brings fruit. Why then do we want the fruits of prayer at once?" asks St. Francis de Sales.

LESSON IX.

The Fruits of Prayer.

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) Which are the principal fruits of prayer? (Deharbe)
- 2) Is prayer necessary for salvation? L. XXVIII, Q. 305.
- 3) At what particular times should we pray? L. XXVIII, Q. 306.

Preparation. Dear children, once an architect drew a plan for our Holy Father. The architect's little boy was allowed to hand it to the Pope. The Pope was pleased with the plan and also with the boy. He opened a drawer, in which there was much gold, and said to the little fellow: "Now take a handful!" The boy looked at the Pope and said: "Holy Father, you reach in; you have a bigger hand than I!"—When we pray, we ought to leave it to God to give us what He thinks best. When God reaches into His treasure of grace, we always receive what we need. How is our prayer in that case?—Everything depends upon praying properly. You have all heard of that in the last class. Let us first review this lesson. (*Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson.*)—If we pray well, we do not pray in vain. The Divine Saviour has said that expressly. "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." But what do we receive through prayer?—

Aim. This question we are going to answer now: *What are the fruits of prayer?*—We see that very beautifully expressed in the life of St. Aloysius. Let us consider the Saint at prayer.

Presentation. Aloysius had a very pious mother. Scarcely was Aloysius able to speak the first words, when she taught him how to sign himself with the

sign of the Cross, and to pronounce the Holy Name of Jesus. Soon the good seed sprang up in that tender heart. Just as soon as Aloysius was able to walk, he loved to make his way to some quiet place, in order to pray. Oftentimes they found him kneeling in some corner of the house or behind a wood pile. His mother rejoiced greatly over that, for it was her heart's desire, that her child should some day dedicate himself entirely to God's service. But his father was of a different mind; he wanted his son some day to become a brave soldier. In the beginning Aloysius also found pleasure in being with the soldiers. But very soon he did not want to have anything more to do with a soldier's life. Henceforth he turned his mind to the dear Lord.

When Aloysius arose from bed in the morning, immediately he would sign himself with the sign of the Cross. Then he clothed himself like a good, modest child. When he had finished, he would kneel down and say a good morning prayer with all his heart. After he was bigger, he practised mental prayer, or meditation, each morning. Thereupon he would assist at Holy Mass and serve the priest at the altar as piously as an Angel. During the day he always thought of God and frequently made ejaculations. As he began the day with God, so also he ended the day with God. Aloysius also continued to live this pious life of prayer as a page in the royal court of Spain. He redoubled his zeal; yes, through the power of prayer he preserved his young heart pure and undefiled in the midst of the dangers of court life. Thus he became from day to day more virtuous and perfect.

Meanwhile Aloysius had determined to leave the life of the world and to enter a monastery. Therefore he told that to his father. However, his father did not want to hear of that at all. Sorrowing Aloysius turned away and sought comfort in prayer. After a time he went to his father again and begged him even more fervently for permission. But his father in a towering

rage showed him the door. Aloysius then went to his room, threw himself upon his knees before a crucifix, and prayed fervently to God, that He might change the hard will of his father. Then he bared his back and beat himself with a scourge. His father had been watching him secretly. Then the father's heart was softened. In tears he said: "My son, you have struck deep wounds into my heart. If it is God's will, go, and be happy!" And Aloysius was happy. Henceforth he belonged entirely to the good God. After six years he ended his holy life by a happy death.

Explanation. 1. At prayer we speak and converse with God. Aloysius from his tenderest youth was filled with zeal at prayer; nothing was dearer to him than to pray. Thus he became more and more intimate with God, continually his love of God grew more ardent, his joy in God became greater, his longing for God increased; but he also became richer and richer in grace before God. Briefly, God was all to him. He could say in all truth: O God, Thou art mine and I am Thine! Aloysius was entirely one with God. That is the first fruit of prayer: *it unites us with God.* (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.*)

2. A proverb says: "Tell me, with whom you keep company, and I will tell you what you are." A child, that likes to go with bad companions, is a bad child; a child, that likes to go with good companions, is a good child. Aloysius loved to keep company most of all with God like the Angels of Heaven; his conversation was in Heaven. Therefore he no longer had any thoughts for the things of earth, but only for heavenly things. Aloysius wanted only what God wanted; he loved what God loved; he detested what God detested; he was heavenly-minded. That is the second fruit of prayer: *it makes us heavenly-minded.* (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

3. In his early years Aloysius came to the royal court.

That was a dangerous time for him. Why?—The life at the royal court offered a thousand seductions and temptations to his young heart. There were banquets there, dancing and playing; careless friends and easy-going worldlings gave him a bad example; Satan lay in hiding for his ruin. How easily might not the weak boy have lost his innocence and fallen into all sorts of evil ways! And yet, he preserved his innocence as pure as a lily. How was that possible?—Of himself Aloysius did not, of course, have the strength to do that. But he knew very well: God is strong enough to save me from this fiery furnace. Therefore Aloysius prayed continually and the prayers strengthened him again against evil. That is a third fruit of prayer: *it strengthens us against evil.* (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)

4. Aloysius was not only strong against evil, but he was also strong in good. He advanced from day to day in the life of virtue. But you may not suppose, that this happened without trouble. No, good always costs a struggle and sacrifice. But Aloysius prayed and God gave him strength in doing good. Thus good became easy for him and the bitter was made sweet. He could say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him, that strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv, 13). That again is a fruit of prayer: *it gives us zeal and energy for good.* (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)

5. Aloysius wanted to offer his life entirely to the good God and enter a monastery. Was his father agreed with that?—No, he did not want to hear of that at all and sent him away with harsh words. Naturally Aloysius was very sad over that. In his soul it was just as it is sometimes in the heavens, when the dark clouds do not allow the sunlight to shine through. But the Saint knew very well, what the Apostle James says: "Is any of you sad? Let him pray." (v, 13). Jesus acted like that also in the Garden of Olives, when He was sad unto death. Aloysius prayed and very soon he became light of heart again; bright, kindly

sunshine entered into his soul. That is a new fruit of prayer: *it comforts us in adversity. (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

6. Aloysius had clearly seen: God calls me to His holy service! However, his father would not allow him to go. What was he to do in this need? Aloysius prayed to God unceasingly, to change the mind of his father. For a long time his prayer seemed in vain. A second request made to his father was likewise in vain. But behold! suddenly his prayer was heard. His father gave his consent, even though it was with a heavy heart. Do you see? So much is persevering prayer able to accomplish! That again is a fruit of prayer: *it obtains help for us in times of need. (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

7. Soon Aloysius had ended his life; but he was also a perfect Saint. What the priest had said to him at Holy Baptism, that he remembered to the end: "Receive this white garment and bring it back without stain to the judgment seat of Jesus Christ." Aloysius died in his baptismal innocence. Never did he soil the white garment with a serious sin. To live in the grace of God and especially to persevere in the grace of God till death, that is called the grace of final perseverance. Everything depends upon that. For of what use is it to begin and not to persevere? As we die, so we remain for all eternity. But we obtain the grace of final perseverance through persevering prayer. That is the last and the best fruit of prayer: *it obtains for us the grace of perseverance until death. (Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

8. From all this you can easily see how necessary it is to pray. Prayer is just as necessary for our eternal salvation as breathing is for the life of the body. Our Catechism says: Prayer is necessary to salvation, and without it no one having the use of reason can be saved. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* Dear children, never forget that important truth to your last breath.

9. a) In Aloysius we also see, *when we should pray*. Every day was for him a day of prayer. His first thought in the morning was prayer and the last thing he did at night was again to pray. In the church he was as devout as an Angel and gave to all the best of examples. He prayed often during the day, but especially when the bell admonished him to pray, and also before and after meals. Thus we also ought to pray: we should pray particularly on Sundays and holydays, every morning and night. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

b) At certain times Aloysius redoubled his zeal in prayer. As a page in the royal court he was surrounded by many *dangers* and *temptations*. Therefore he prayed a great deal, that God might not allow him to fall. Aloysius wanted to consecrate his life to God; that was for him an urgent *need*. His father refused to allow him to enter the monastery. That was a private *affliction* for the little Saint. Therefore he prayed more than usual, that God might make all things turn out well. When Aloysius was already in the monastery a great devastating pestilence broke out in Rome. The people were sorely afflicted. In this public affliction the Saint prayed unceasingly, that God might turn away His scourge from the people. We too should pray: in all dangers, temptations and afflictions. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

Write on the blackboard:

The Fruits of Prayer:

- 1) unites us with God—makes us heavenly-minded;
- 2) strengthens us against evil—strengthens us in doing good;
- 3) obtains comfort in tribulations, help in need, grace of final perseverance.

No salvation without prayer—absolutely necessary for all who have the use of reason.

We should pray:

- a) especially on Sundays and holydays — every morning and night—before and after meals.
- b) in dangers, temptations, afflictions.

Synthesis. Aloysius was a friend of prayer. His example is a model for all of us. Which are the fruits of prayer?—Is prayer necessary for salvation?—When ought we to pray?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class.*)

Application. 1. Prayer brings help in time of need. The people of Israel were engaged in battle. Moses sent Josue against the enemy; he himself went up into a mountain, in order to pray. And behold, as long as Moses lifted up his arms, the Israelites conquered; when he allowed his arms to sink down, the enemy advanced victoriously. Then two men supported Moses' arms, until the enemy had been completely beaten.—Once Peter lay in prison. The next morning he was to be put to death. Where was he to find help in that need? In this extremity the faithful prayed unceasingly to God for him. In the night suddenly an Angel of the Lord entered the prison and awakened the Apostle from sleep: "Arise quickly!" Then the iron chains fell from his hands. They passed the guards at the gate; the iron doors sprang open and Peter was free. See! prayer has such a wonderful power.

2. Jesus was a Master of prayer. Oftentimes He spent the entire night in prayer. Just recall how the Saviour promised the true bread from Heaven. There we read expressly: "He went up into a mountain alone to pray. And when it was evening he was there alone." (Matt. xiv, 23). But Christ also admonished us, that we ought to pray always and not to grow weary. (Luke xviii, 1). St. Paul also says: "Pray without ceasing." (I Thess. v, 17). Do you like to pray? Are you zealous in prayer? Whoever likes to pray, will become

heavenly-minded. But what if a person does not like to pray? Listen to what St. Teresa once said: "Whoever does not pray, either becomes an animal or a devil." Those are strong words, but true words. Without prayer the soul becomes blind and deaf and lame and dead. A flower without light and air and water must wither and dry up. Thus also must the poor human heart wither and die without prayer. Prayer is absolutely necessary for salvation. Never, never forget that great truth!

3. The saintly Bishop Wittmann of Ratisbon often used to go to the children in school and asked them frequently: Which are the best behaved children?—Those that like to pray. Which are the most diligent children?—Children that pray. Which children remain well in soul and body?—Children who like to pray. Which children preserve their innocence most surely of all?—Those who like to pray. Remember that, children, and like to pray and pray well! "Whoever likes to pray, will surely be saved; whoever does not pray, will most certainly be lost." (St. Augustine). Which do you choose?—

III.
THE LORD'S PRAYER.

LESSON X.

The Our Father.

(Preface)

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) Which is the most excellent of all prayers? (Deharbe)
- 2) Why is the Our Father called the Lord's Prayer? (Deharbe)
- 3) What does the Lord's Prayer contain? (Deharbe)
- 4) What do you call its *Preface*? (Deharbe)
- 5) What does the *Father* remind us of? (Deharbe)
- 6) Why do we say *Our* Father, and not *my* Father? (Deharbe)
- 7) Why do we add the words "*Who art in Heaven*"? (Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, how you ought to pray, that you already know. What fruits prayer produces, you also know. Let us first review this teaching. (*Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.*) —We must pray. Jesus has showed us how to pray. To pray was His favorite labor in the quiet home at Nazareth. We saw the Child Jesus praying in the temple. Prayer and fasting were the introduction into His office as Messiah. During His public life Jesus often spent the whole night in prayer. The Saviour also prayed while dying. What was His dying prayer? —Surely there must be something great and important about prayer. Yes, it is a great grace, that we are allowed to pray. Never is a Christian so beautiful as when he raises his hands and heart to God in prayer. The disciples also suspected that. Filled with astonishment they saw their Divine Master pray. "O, if only we too could pray like that!"—that surely must have been their heart's desire. Once when Jesus had ceased

praying, one of the disciples asked Him: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." (Luke xi, 1).

Presentation. And Jesus said to them: When you pray, say:

Our Father, Who art in Heaven!
Hallowed be Thy Name!
Thy kingdom come!
Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!
Give us this day our daily bread!
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive
those that trespass against us!
And lead us not into temptation!
But deliver us from evil! Amen.

(N. B. The catechist ought to say the Our Father himself slowly and in a dignified manner for the children. That will not be without good effect. After each petition let him make a short pause. That will contribute to an understanding of the prayer.)

Aim. *Now I am going to explain the Our Father to you.* It is so simple, and yet there is so much in it.

Explanation. 1. There are many beautiful prayers. We have splendid prayers from the Church—the prayers at the divine services, especially at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, at the administration of the Sacraments, the prayers for the dying. We have excellent prayers from the Saints—the "Salve Regina," the "Memorare," the "Soul of Christ, sanctify me!" But none is as excellent and beautiful as the Our Father. The most excellent of all prayers is the Our Father, or the Lord's Prayer. (*Repeat together; use the black-board; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.*) From whom have we the Our Father?—Christ, the Divine Teacher Himself, has taught us that prayer; Christ, the Divine Master, has prayed it for us. More than that; the Divine Teacher has even commanded us to pray like that: "When you pray, say: Our Father!"

2. The Our Father is called the Lord's Prayer, because Christ our Lord has taught it to us, and commanded us to say it. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

3. Let us now make a brief survey of this prayer. What parts can we distinguish in the Our Father?—Whoever is allowed to appear before the President, addresses him reverently: "Your Excellency!" Thus also do we address God: "*Our Father, Who art in Heaven!*" That is the introduction, or the *Preface*. Only then do we begin to pray: "Hallowed be Thy Name! Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!" These are three *Petitions* for the honor of God. We continue: "Give us this day our daily bread!" That is a petition for our body. Thereupon there follow three other petitions: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us! And lead us not into temptation! But deliver us from evil! Amen". These are three petitions for our soul.—The Lord's Prayer contains a short *Preface* and seven *Petitions*. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). What contents have the seven petitions of the Our Father?—

Write on the blackboard:

A *Preface*—seven *Petitions*;
three petitions for the honor of God;
a petition for the body;
three petitions for the soul.

Now let us begin to explain the single parts of the Our Father. For today let us take only the *Preface*!

4. Jesus said: "Thus ought you to pray!" Then the disciples listened with holy desire. But when the Divine Master began: "Our Father", they were all astonished; they could hardly believe, that they were allowed to say "*Father*" to God. But why not?—They had hitherto never prayed like that. For the Jews had a holy fear of God. They imagined, that God could only punish, but not love as a Father. Therefore

they did not even dare to speak the word "God"; they always said only "Jehova—the Lord". But Jesus said it; therefore we may confidently address God as "Father". That is indeed a great honor. Just think: How great God is and how little we children of men are!

"King Solomon was greater than all the kings of earth; in riches and wisdom no one was like him. And all the kings of earth sought to look upon his countenance, that they might hear his wisdom, which God had given into his heart". Thus does the Bible relate. But what is this glorious king Solomon as compared with God! Only a poor little beggar boy. And yet we may say to God "Father!" How holy God is and how sinful we children of men are! All the Angels and Saints of Heaven are not pure and holy before the All-pure and the All-holy One. And yet we may say "Father!" What an honor for us and what love on the part of God!

A good child speaks only reverently with its father. It loves its good father; it trusts confidently, that its father will provide for all that it needs each day. Thus also we ought to pray to God with childlike reverence, love and confidence. The word "Father" reminds us that God is our Father, so good and so worthy of veneration that there is no earthly father like Him; and that we, therefore, ought to pray to Him with childlike reverence, love and confidence. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

5. Jesus teaches us to pray "*Our Father*", not "*My Father*". Surely that is not without some good reason. God is not only *your* Father and *my* Father, but *our* Father, the Father of all men. We altogether are brothers and sisters of a great family and God is our Father. He gave us all life; He cares for our life; He wants some day to give us eternal life. How ought the children of a family to be united?—But what if one has no love for the other? Is the father pleased with that?—And if men are unkind and heartless and quar-

relsome with one another, must that not displease the heavenly Father? All ought to love one another, to help one another, to pray for one another: that is the will of God.—We say “our” Father and not “my” Father, because God being the Father of all men, we are all His children, and should therefore love one another as brothers, and pray for one another. (Mal. ii, 10). (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

6. If God is our Father, then Heaven is our home. Every Our Father reminds us of that; for we say: “Who art in Heaven.” But then we ought to like to be in Heaven with our thoughts, especially when we pray. Just think of St. Aloysius.—We may not act as the sparrows, that fly about only on the earth, but rather we ought to free our heart from earthly things. Just as the eagle raises himself high upwards into the air, so we ought also at prayer to lift our hearts to Heaven.—We add these words: “Who art in Heaven”, to call to our mind, 1. that God, although He is everywhere, dwells especially in Heaven, where we shall one day see Him face to face (1 Cor. xiii, 12); 2. that we are but pilgrims upon earth, and that our true home is in Heaven; and 3. that when we pray, we must detach our hearts from all earthly things, and raise them up to Heaven. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Write on the blackboard:

1. Most excellent of all prayers—Our Father—taught by the Lord Jesus Himself (2).

Our Father, Who art in Heaven:

1. *Father*—God—our Father—pray like children;
2. *Our*—God—the Father of all men—we brethren;
3. *Who art in Heaven*—raise our hearts to Heaven.

Synthesis. This is sufficient for today. Let us review the chief points. Which is the most excellent of all prayers?—Why is the Our Father called the Lord’s Prayer?—On what occasion did Jesus teach us this prayer?—Of what does the Our Father con-

sist?—Which is the Preface?—How may the seven Petitions be divided?—Of what does the word “Father” remind us?—Why do we say “our” Father and not “my” Father”?—Why do we add the words: “Who art in Heaven”?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and the blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class*).

Application. 1. God is our Father and we are His children. But then we must also love God as good children love their father and we may not grieve His good fatherly Heart. To be a child of God is worth a thousand times more than to be a child of a king. But if we are of such a high nobility, we must also conduct ourselves in a noble manner. We may not do anything bad, neither inwardly on the soul, nor outwardly on the body. The Polish King Boleslaus carried constantly the picture of his father on his breast. As often as he undertook anything, he looked at the picture and said: “I will do nothing, that is unworthy of my father”. We carry the picture of God, our heavenly Father, in our soul. Think of that, as often as the inclination to do evil arises within you, and say to yourself: “I will do nothing, that is unworthy of my heavenly Father!”

2. God is the Father of all men. May then a child despise another child? insult, ridicule, strike another? Can that be something to which the heavenly Father is indifferent? Or, a child is clothed poorly and badly, crippled, slow in thought and awkward in speech: is it therefore not a child of God? God is indeed its Father; and perhaps the poor child will receive some day a better place in Heaven than all of us together.

3. Heaven is our home. Think of that every morning immediately upon wakening and lift your heart heavenwards. And if you are about to become disobedient, impatient and dissatisfied, say to your soul: Do you no longer know what you prayed this morning? Did you not say: “Our Father, Who art in Heaven!”?

Do you not want to do and suffer anything at all for Heaven?

4. Now just one good resolution till the next class! It is not very much, and yet, it is much, if you do it. Recite each time the words of the Preface *with all your heart*: "Our Father, Who art in Heaven!" Are you agreed to that? I am going to see, who will keep his word and not forget it.

LESSON XI.

The Our Father.

(1-3 Petition)

Catechetical Unit:

1) What do we ask for in the *First* Petition? (Deharbe)

2) Why is this the *First* Petition? (Deharbe)

3) What do we ask for in the *Second* Petition? (Deharbe)

4) What is the meaning of the *Third* Petition? (Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, the noble Baron of Frankenstein was on a journey with his family. A child was just reading aloud from a prayer-book the morning devotions. The next morning the father said: "Today I am going to say the prayers". And he began with his strong, deep voice: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Our Father, Who art in Heaven"—Did he perhaps not know any other morning prayer? No, he wanted to say: The most beautiful and the most excellent of prayers is the Our Father. We have already heard of that; let us review it now. (*Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson*).—In the last class we also made a resolution—Have you

kept it?—Let us continue and consider the seven petitions of the Our Father. The first three refer to the honor of God. What are they?—

Aim. *I am now going to explain to you these first three Petitions of the Our Father, so that henceforth you may pray them with devotion.*

Presentation and Explanation.

1. "Our Father, Who are in Heaven!" thus do we pray. At the same time we ascend in thought into the heights of Heaven. We see the Triune God in wonderful glory, surrounded by a whole sea of light. But near to God's throne we see Mary, the dear Mother of God and Queen of Heaven. We see the millions and millions of Angels even to the Cherubim and Seraphim and hear their unceasing hymn of praise: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!" We see all the Saints of Heaven—the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, the holy Apostles and Martyrs, the holy Virgins and Confessors, the holy Innocent Children. We see God and adore Him and sing to Him: "Holy God, we praise Thy Name!" O, how beautiful it must be in Heaven! How much we too would like to see God and adore Him with the Angels and Saints! But that cannot be as yet. Therefore let us, at least, adore God on earth:

"Hallowed be Thy Name!"

In this Petition there is a great deal concealed. You are not able to discover all by yourselves. Just listen!

a) The earth is great. More than 1500 millions of men live upon it. But only a third of them are Christian; all the others are still heathens. They do not know the true God and do not love Him and do not glorify Him. Can that be a matter of indifference to you? If you are true children of God and really love God, you will think and pray: *Would that all heathens knew and glorified God!*

But likewise of the 500 millions of Christians many do not really know God, because they have a wrong Faith. And even among the 300 millions of Catholics matters still look very sad indeed. There are thousands and thousands, who have entirely forgotten their religion; or if they still know it, they act as though they did not know it. They do not pray any more; they no longer go to church; or if they do go to church, their hearts are all distracted with worldly cares and plans, with bad thoughts and desires. Will a true Christian remain cold at such a sight? No, that will grieve his heart and he will wish and pray: *Would that all Christians knew and glorified God more and more!* Do you see? That is contained in the first Petition of the Our Father: We ask that God may be rightly known, loved and honored by us and all men. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.*)

b) But that is not all yet. Here are several boys playing together. But what must I hear? Every few moments some one speaks the Holy Name of God carelessly. Another does even worse than that. Because the other boys do not do as he desires, immediately he flares up in anger and curses! Really one might almost imagine, that a devil has come forth from Hell and entered into that saucy young fellow and was cursing through his mouth. And then afterwards he raises his hands and prays: "Hallowed be Thy Name!" Why is he ridiculing the Lord God! When such a person, who curses frequently, gets bigger, generally nothing will be sacred any more to him; he will begin to ridicule and blaspheme God and God's Providence and everything that is sacred. Yes, many a one even lifts his hand to swear and calls upon God to bear witness to a lie, by the sin of perjury.—Can a pious Christian listen to all that and be unmoved? No, this cursing and profaning of God's name cuts deeply into his soul. That is the reason why we pray: **May the Name of God never be profaned or blasphemed.**

(Repeat together; use the blackboard). That too is contained in the First Petition to the Our Father.

Let us now repeat together the whole answer: *In the First Petition: "Hallowed be Thy Name!", we pray that the Name of God may never be profaned or blasphemed, but that God may be rightly known, loved, and honored by us and all men.* If you look carefully, you will find: In this Petition really are contained the first three Commandments of God.—

2. We are still in Heaven with our thoughts. Without end and as far as the eye can see the kingdom of Heaven stretches out before us. And all is light, all love, all peace, all joy! O, how blessed it is to be in Heaven! Yes, St. Paul says: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man (to conceive), what God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. ii, 9). Then in our soul the quiet desire begins to stir: O, that the kingdom of God would come down to us! O, would that we could enter very soon into the kingdom of Heaven! Our desire becomes a prayer:

"Thy kingdom come!"

In this Petition also there is contained much more than you imagine. Let us see. There is a threefold kingdom of God: the kingdom of God *in us*, the kingdom of God *above us*, the kingdom of God *around us*.

a) Already as little children you were brought to Holy Baptism. What happened then?—The Holy Ghost purified your soul from the hateful stain of original sin. He decorated your soul with the shining garment of sanctifying grace. He placed the love of God as a little seed in your soul. Now your soul was beautiful, so beautiful, that the Holy Ghost Himself took up His abode *within* you. Your heart was really a little kingdom of Heaven. But this little kingdom of Heaven ought to become bigger continually. How is that possible?—As often as you pray, as often as you assist at Holy Mass, by each worthy Confession, by

each worthy Communion you can grow in the grace of God. And why do I come to you into school? I am to see to it, that the divine seed of love continually grows and flourishes in your hearts. Do you see? Thus does the kingdom of God come down to you each day. We mean that above all things in the Second Petition: **We ask especially that the kingdom of divine grace and love may now be established in our hearts.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

b) But the greater the kingdom of God becomes in our hearts, the greater will the longing become in our hearts for the kingdom of Heaven *above us*. Many a pious Christian says as did the holy Martyr Ignatius: "O, how the world disgusts me, when I look up to Heaven!" For there is our true home. There dwells peace. There some day the eternal light will shine for us. Thither the true Christian heart is drawn with a mighty power. Therefore we pray: "Thy kingdom come!"—In the Second Petition: we ask that after death, we may be all admitted into the kingdom of Heaven. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

c) But where is the kingdom of God *around us*? Christ has brought us that from Heaven—His holy Church. This kingdom was once small and insignificant like a little mustard seed; but it has become great like a mighty tree. Of course—we have already heard that—many millions do not as yet know anything of the kingdom of God on earth. How poorly off they are! Would that the light of grace of the Holy Ghost might shine into their hearts, so that all of them might become children of our holy Church and some day children of God in Heaven! That also is contained in the Second Petition: "Thy kingdom come!" We ask that the kingdom of God, the Church, may be more and more extended upon the earth. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Now let us repeat the entire answer together: *In the Second Petition: "Thy kingdom come!" we ask 1. that the kingdom of God, the Church, may be more and*

more extended upon the earth; 2. that the kingdom of divine grace and love may now be established in our hearts in order, that 3. after this life, we may all be admitted into the kingdom of Heaven.

3. Our thoughts are still with God in Heaven. We see the Angels, the messengers of God. We see the Saints, the friends of God. Joyfully the Angels and the Saints obey every word and gesture of God. God's will is holy to them, God's will is their own will. Therefore in Heaven there is only peace and joy, love and happiness. O, would that it were also thus upon earth! Earth would almost be like Paradise again. That is the desire of our heart and therefore we pray:

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

There are two chief thoughts contained in this Petition: that we do God's will and that we allow God's will to be fulfilled in us.

a) What is God's will? His Commandments tell us that. Just think of Aloysius! How conscientiously the little Saint kept God's Commandments! How he feared every, even the smallest sin! How bitterly he repented and wept over his little youthful faults! Jesus once said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John iv, 34). Thus too could Aloysius say: God's will is my daily food. God's will ought to be holy to us too as to the Angels and the Saints of God. That is contained in the Third Petition: We ask that we and all men may do the will of God on earth as faithfully and cheerfully as the Angels and Saints do it in Heaven. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard.*)

b) It is sometimes difficult to do God's will; but to allow God's will to be fulfilled in us is generally even more difficult. There is a Saint, who has led a wonderfully beautiful life and who suffered a great deal—St. Elizabeth. Very early she lost her husband. She wept as though her heart would break for sorrow. But even worse things happened. She was driven out of her possessions. In the midst of a cold winter's night

she had to leave. Nowhere did she find shelter. Finally the noble countess found a place in the pigsty. But do you suppose, that she quarrelled with God! No! At midnight she heard the little bell of a nearby convent ring. Elizabeth arose and went into the church and prayed: "Holy God, we praise Thy Name!" Now you understand the Third Petition. Whoever speaks it with his heart, will always think: O God, do with me what Thou wilt! We profess that, in all things we submit ourselves to the holy will of God, (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Let us say the whole answer together: *In the Third Petition: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!" we ask 1. that we and all men may do the will of God on earth as faithfully and cheerfully as the Angels and Saints do it in Heaven; and 2. that we profess that, in all things, we submit ourselves to the holy will of God.*

Write on the blackboard:

"Hallowed be Thy Name!"

- a) to know and love and honor God;
- b) not to profane and blaspheme God's Name.

"Thy kingdom come!"

- a) God's kingdom within us—grace and love;
- b) God's kingdom above us — the kingdom of Heaven;
- c) God's kingdom around us—the Church.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!"

- a) to do God's will—Angels and Saints;
- b) to allow God's will to be fulfilled in us.

Synthesis. The first three Petitions of the Our Father refer to God's honor. What do we ask for in the First Petition: "Hallowed be Thy Name"?—What do we ask for in the Second Petition: "Thy kingdom come"?—Of how many kinds is the kingdom of God? What do we desire in the Third Petition: "Thy will

be done on earth as it is in Heaven"?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and black-board. Assign the lesson for the next class*).

Application. 1. *"Hallowed be Thy Name!"* We know and love the good God. But whoever is really in earnest in regard to the love of God, will also be glad to contribute his mite that others may also know and love and glorify God more and more. Can you do that? There are still many heathens. Give them the alms of prayer and a little money for the Society of the Holy Childhood, so that finally they may awaken from their sleep and arise and sanctify God's Name. There are many bad Christians. Give them a good example by a truly Christian life. Generally a good example will do much more than many words.

2. *"Thy kingdom come!"* A pure heart is a little kingdom of Heaven. St. Augustine once said: "We pray: Our Father, Who art in Heaven! Instead of that we might also pray: Our Father, Who art in the *Heavens!*" Perhaps you have never thought earnestly of that. But if that is so, may a Christian desecrate his heart and lay it waste by a mortal sin? To drive God out of His possession and to make one's heart a little Hell—what malice!

3. *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!"* A child does not want to go to church on a Sunday. If its mother says anything, it becomes saucy at once. That child is unkind and quarrelsome with its brothers and sisters. Perhaps it even does shameful things. And yet, that child prays every day: "Thy will be done!" What do you say to that? Why, that child insults the dear Lord and lies to Him each time.

"Thy will be done!" Job lost everything and was deserted by all and besides he was covered with the leprosy. Nevertheless he prayed: "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away. As it pleaseth the Lord, so it is done. The Name of the Lord be praised"!

LESSON XII.

The Our Father.

(4. Petition)

Catechetical Unit:

1) What do we ask for in the *Fourth* Petition?
(Deharbe)

2) Why does Christ bid us ask for our *daily* bread?
(Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, in the Our Father there is more wisdom and beauty than in all the other books of the wise men. For it comes from Eternal Wisdom and Beauty, from Jesus Christ. We know the first three Petitions. They refer to God's honor and glory. Let us review this. (*Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.*)—We have given to God what is God's. Now let us think also of ourselves. We pray first for the body. What do we need for the body and for life?—All that we need for the body and for life we gather together briefly in the Petition:

"Give us this day our daily bread!"

Aim. *Today I am going to explain to you the Fourth Petition of the Our Father, so that henceforth you may pray with more understanding than heretofore. This short Petition has some very rich contents. Each word has its own meaning. Let us look at each one in turn.*

Presentation and Explanation.

1. Just think of the wonderful multiplication of the loaves. More than five thousand people had gathered together. Throughout the whole day they tarried with Jesus, and did not grow weary of listening to His teachings. Already evening was come and the people had nothing to eat. What was to be done? Send them

away hungry? That would not do; for many had a long distance to their homes. Then the Saviour blesses five loaves of bread and two fishes. The disciples begin to distribute them to the people. When, O wonders, the gifts increase more and more at their hands. All the people ate and were filled. In the end there were twelve baskets left over filled with the remnants.

Jesus had fed thousands of people in a miraculous manner. But He did not give them choice food and fine wines. Could He not have done so? O yes; we see that at the wedding feast of Cana. "Nothing is impossible with God". No, the Saviour gave to the hungry people only bread and fish. That was the ordinary daily food of the people. But each one received as much as he needed. Yes, there was even something left over for those, who had to make the long journey home.

We pray in the Our Father: "Give us our daily bread!" Do you now understand how that is meant?—We mean to say: Good Father in Heaven! We do not desire choice food and drink; we do not want riches and abundance. Only give us what we need for our body and our life—simple nourishment, clothing to protect us, healthy dwelling—and we are satisfied. Thus too does St. Paul admonish the Christians: "Having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content." (I Tim. vi, 8).—In the Fourth Petition we ask that God would give us all that is daily necessary for our body (and soul). (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis*). 2. Christ bids us to ask for our daily bread, to teach us, that we should wish only for necessities, not for riches and abundance. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

2. Jesus teaches us to pray for our *daily* bread. Surely that word is added for some good reason. Just pay attention! You are now about eleven years of age. That is more than 4000 days. Was there among these

4000 days a single day even, when you did not get anything to eat? You ate at least three times each day; that is more than 12,000. Just so many thousand times have you cause for thanking God. You must not indeed imagine, that things might not be otherwise and that they must always remain like that. There have already been times, when people tried to still their hunger with roots, herbs, rats and mice. Every year one can hear, that here and there a terrible famine has broken out. How happy those poor people would be for only a little piece of bread? Every day you have a good meal. Are you also thankful for it? When you pray: "Give us this day our *daily* bread!" each time it is a reminder for you: *Thank your heavenly Father! (Use the blackboard.)*

4. There is a third lesson for you. We pray for *our* bread. Now many a one imagines perhaps, that he has a right to bread, and that our Lord must give it to him. That would indeed be a saucy and impudent way of talking—to demand *our* bread from God. What then does that word mean?—Jesus once told about a rich man. He had all that his heart could desire. He clothed himself in purple and fine linen; he also feasted sumptuously each day. Could that man also pray for *our* bread? Why, he ate and drank as though every day were a picnic! He led a free and easy life, as though he had nothing else to do upon earth. He did not work at all, he idled away the whole day. Do you now understand, what is contained in that little word "*our*"?—*We ought to earn our daily bread by honorable work.* St. Paul writes: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." (II Thess. iii, 10). *(Use the blackboard.)*

5. Now we begin at the beginning. We say to our heavenly Father: "*Give!*" A little word and yet it says more than a long speech.—Our daily bread and all that we need for life is *a gift of God*. The good Lord and God sets the table for us each day. How easily we forget that! Of course, children get

their daily bread immediately from their parents. But what if the father has no work? Or if business stops? What if the father gets sick or even dies? Or what if the hail spoils everything in the fields? You see, that you have every reason for praying each day with all your heart: "Our Father, *give!*" Many a rich man imagines in his foolish pride: "I do not need anything from the Lord God; I have money and wealth enough." That is wicked and blasphemous talk. How easily cannot a rich man become a beggar overnight? That has happened often enough. In the big cities there are people, who formerly had millions, and now they must again be satisfied with miserable beggars' soup. And cannot a rich man become sick? A Russian prince had many millions. Then he got a bad disease of the throat. He could no longer swallow a morsel of bread or a drop of water. He had to die of hunger beside his money bag. (*Use the blackboard*).

6. The Our Father does not say: Give *me* bread! but rather: Give *us* bread! What sort of a teaching may there be in that expression?—In that little word we see the good fatherly Heart of God. In our city there are many thousands of people, and each one needs something to eat every day. But in the great wide world there are more than 1500 millions of people and for all the heavenly Father must provide.—In the little word "us" we also see, whether a person has a genuine Christian heart or only a stone in his breast. Thousands stumble over the little word "us". How so?—They say it with their mouth; but their heart says: If only *I* have something to eat; of what concern are others to me? Therefore they do not give anything to the poor, or at most they give them only unkind and bitter words. In this regard the early Christians were entirely different people. No poor person had to suffer need; for the rich thought to themselves: What God has given to me, belongs also to the poor! (*Use the blackboard*).

7. We are not yet finished. The little word "to-

day" has indeed only two syllables, but it, nevertheless, demands its rights. What does it say? Ought we to ask for our daily bread only today? No, for we need something to eat tomorrow also. Jesus wishes to teach us: You need something to eat every day and every day you ought to ask the heavenly Father for it. —But there is also something else contained in that little word "today." Our Blessed Saviour once gave us a very beautiful and impressive teaching in the sermon on the mount: "Be not solicitous for your life, what you will eat, nor for your body, how you will clothe it; Consider the birds of the air! They do not sow, neither do they reap; and yet, your heavenly Father nourishes them. Are you of less value than they?" Just look at a sparrow! He has not a beautiful garment of feathers and cannot sing beautifully and did not learn anything. Nevertheless things do not go badly with him. He needs food every day and not a little at that; twice each year he needs a new dress. But he does not worry at all, but rather allows the dear Lord God to provide for him. That is what Jesus means: Do not look too far ahead and do not worry too much about your daily bread! Do your part—pray and work!—and God will do His part. (*Use the blackboard*).

Write on the blackboard:

"Give us this day our daily bread!"

1. Give us what is necessary each day for body (and soul);
2. Give us, not riches and abundance, but only the necessities;
3. *Bread*—nourishment and clothing;
4. *Daily*—gratitude to God;
5. *Our*—earn it by honest labor;
6. *Give*—a gift of God;
7. *Us*—to all men—alms;
8. *This day*—pray each day—no worries.

Synthesis. The Fourth Petition of the Our Father has only seven words, but in each word Jesus preaches to us a serious sermon. We ask for *bread*. What do we mean?—What does St. Paul admonish us?—We pray for *daily* bread. What do we owe God for that? We pray for *our* bread. When is it our bread?—What does the little word “*give*” tell us?—Why do we say give “*us*”?—What twofold admonition is contained in the word “*today*”?—What do we ask for, then, in the Fourth Petition?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class*).

Application. 1. Many a one complains: “I pray every day for daily bread and yet, I have cares enough”. Who is to blame for that? Either you or God. *You* are to blame, if you do not work industriously. Many people are indeed diligent at eating and drinking, but lazy at work. You need not complain at all, if things go badly with you. You are to blame, if you crawl about on the earth on Sundays and work diligently. Whoever makes the Sunday a work-day, cannot have any blessing. A curse rests upon a Sunday, that is used as a work-day. Perhaps *God* might also be to blame, in as much as He wants to test you. For the soul of man is like a plant, that thrives better in the storm and the rain than in the clear sunshine. Therefore the Holy Scripture says so beautifully: “For whom God loveth He chastiseth: and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth” (Hebrews xii, 6).

2. God has been giving you your daily bread so long already. Children, are you grateful for that? Do you pray each day before and after meals?—A simple farmer once went to town and took dinner in a hotel. He prayed before eating just as he did at home. A man of that town saw him praying and said in ridicule: “That is out of date long ago with educated people to pray at meals!” The farmer replied: “Well,

that is the custom in my house. But I have some boarders at home, who are in this regard quite up to the new fashions and they do not pray at all." The man said: "They are indeed sensible and up-to-date. What sort of people are they?" The farmer replied: "They are my pigs! They are accustomed to that from their youth. They eat, and after they have finished, they run away and no longer think of Him who has fed them."

Children, do you also want to be as ungrateful as that overwise man of the city? Do you want to be like the senseless animals? If not, think of Him, from Whom you have your daily bread! Thank the Heavenly Father as children of God!

LESSON XIII.

The Our Father.

(5. Petition)

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) What do we ask for in the *Fifth* Petition (Deharbe)
- 2) May those who do not forgive expect forgiveness themselves? (Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, man has a body and a soul. He must care for both. The body needs each day its food and wants besides that also to be treated properly and in the right way; otherwise it will act as a dissatisfied servant and will refuse to work. Therefore we ask the dear Father in Heaven: "Give us this day our daily bread!" No word in this Petition is without its meaning; you have heard that already. Let us review it. (*Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson*).

In the first three Petitions of the Our Father our

thoughts soar heavenwards: We wish to honor and glorify God. In the fourth Petition we remain on the earth and pray for the body. In the last three Petitions our spirit descends downwards: We pray for our poor *soul*, in order that God may preserve us against three great evils—the guilt of sin, the danger of sin and the punishment for sin.

Aim. *Let us today explain the Fifth Petition of the Our Father: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us." This Petition concerns us very closely.*

Presentation. One day Peter asked the Divine Master: "Lord! how often ought I to forgive my brother, if he sins against me? Perhaps seven times?" Jesus said to him: "I say to thee, not seven times, but seventy times seven times". Then He told a parable.

A servant owed his king 1000 talents and could not pay. Then the king commanded that he and his wife and his children and all that he possessed, be sold and payment be made. The servant fell down at the feet of the king and begged: "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all"! The king took pity on that servant and forgave him the whole debt.

But this servant going out, met one of his fellow servants, who owed him 100 pence. He laid hands on him, strangled him and said: "Pay me, what thou owest"! His fellow servant fell down before him and pleaded: "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all"! But he would not and cast him into prison, until he had paid the entire debt.

But when his fellow servants had seen what he had done, they were very sad at heart. They came and told their master all that had happened. Then the master called that servant to him and said: "Thou wicked servant! I forgave thee the entire debt, because thou didst ask it of me. Ought not thou also to have had mercy on thy fellow servant, as I have had mercy on thee?" And the master became angry and

handed him over to the torturers, until he had paid the entire debt. Thus also will your heavenly Father act towards you, if you do not forgive your brethren from your hearts. (*Show the pupils a large picture of this scene*).

Explanation. 1. The servant owed an immense debt to his master. Nearer and nearer the day approached, when he ought to pay. But he has no money and no one will help him. He has no rest and peace day and night. He thinks to himself and complains: "What will happen to me? What will happen to my wife and children?" Surely, children, a desperate and hopeless state of affairs, is it not? Yes, debts cause heavy cares.—But reflect a little! Have you no debts? You know very well, that you must go to Holy Mass on Sundays; you owe that to God. But a careless child does not want to go. Now it has committed a grievous sin in God's sight. And as often as you commit a sin, you incur a new debt. *Sins are debts in God's eyes.*

2. The poor man cannot pay. What punishment awaits him?—Then he begins to beg: "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." Can he pay? Impossible; for the debt is too great. The king knows that well enough. But because the debtor had begged so humbly and so fervently, the king had mercy upon him! He not only sets him free, but he also magnanimously forgives him the whole debt. The king was merciful and forgiving, was he not?

Now think of yourselves once more. Can you pay the debts of your sins? That is impossible. What do you deserve for them?—God could indeed have you locked up in a fiery prison—in Hell, or at least in Purgatory. But *you beg God* very contritely and humbly, not only to wait, but *to forgive you the debt*. May you pray like that? Is not that too much? No, for Jesus has taught us: "Forgive us our trespasses!" The little debts of sin God wants to remit at once, but the great ones in the Sacrament of Penance.

3. Of course, God does not do that for nothing. The sinner may not act as did the servant of our story. He was very unmerciful towards his fellow servant and had him thrown into prison. What ought he to have done? Jesus Himself tells us: "Ought not thou to have forgiven thy fellow servant his debt, even as I forgave thee thine?" What therefore does God demand?—Just as God forgives you your debts or trespasses, so *you also must forgive your debtors*. Who are your debtors? They are those, who insult, ridicule, strike and accuse you; you must forgive them from your heart. If you are unwilling to forgive, God will not forgive you either. If you are unmerciful and unforgiving towards your brother, the same thing will happen to you that happened to the unmerciful servant: You will be handed over to the torturers. What does that mean?—Some day you will languish in prison. And for how long?—"Until thou hast paid the entire debt". Can the prisoner pay his debt in prison? Never; for the debt is exorbitant and he is, of course, unable to earn anything. Can a person who refuses to be reconciled with his brother, pay his debt in the prison of God? Never; he must suffer for eternity!

Now you will understand the Fifth Petition of the Our Father. In the Fifth Petition we ask that God would so forgive us all our sins as we forgive others who have offended us. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis*). Now you can also understand that they, who forgive not, may not expect forgiveness themselves from God; on the contrary, they pass judgment upon themselves, as often as they say the Our Father. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Write on the blackboard:

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us!"

1. May God forgive us as we forgive those, who have offended us!

2. Otherwise we may not expect forgiveness from God.

Synthesis. We have learned a very important truth today. Jesus taught us the duty of being kind and forgiving with all, not only our friends but even our enemies, our debtors. What is the Fifth Petition of the Our Father?—What do we ask in this Petition?—May we expect forgiveness from God, if we are unmerciful to others?—In what parable does Jesus teach us this truth?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class.*).

Application. 1. God will forgive us just as we forgive our neighbor. Apply that at once to yourselves! Are you not sometimes very irreconcilable and intolerant towards others, your brothers and sisters and other children? There are children, who for whole weeks at a time carry about in their hearts anger and hatred. Yes, it even happens, that they wish one another all sorts of evil. How can such children pray a sincere Our Father? How can they say: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us?" They lie to the dear Lord each time in an impudent manner; and each time they openly challenge Him: Do to me just as I do to others!

2. Many a one imagines: "I cannot forgive and feel kindly again in my heart towards that person!" That is not true. God does not demand impossible things. How, did any one spit in your face? Did any one scourge you? Or crown you with thorns? Or nail you to a Cross?—All that happened to Jesus and yet, He forgave. You know, how He prayed, while dying on the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Are you more than Christ? Did you not offend God oftentimes more grievously? Did He not forgive you again and again? "Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you!" (Luke vi, 27).

3. Years ago there lived in a little town of Spain

a poor widow, who had an only son. One evening a neighbor lady rushed into the house of the widow all excited and cried out: "A fight has occurred between two young men. One has been killed. The dead man is—your son!" Deadly fear laid hold of that mother's heart. She could scarcely believe it. She pulls open the door, and is about to rush out, to see whether it is true.

Then a young man runs up towards her. His face is deathly pale and wild looking, his clothing is soiled with blood. He holds the woman back and begs: "They are pursuing me, they are pursuing me. I did it. For Christ's dear sake pardon me, and save me, hide me in your house! No one will look for me here!" And what did the mother do? She does not say a single word; she leads the murderer into her own room and shows him a place to hide himself. In the next moment they carry the corpse of her son into the house and lay him upon the bed, under which the murderer lies hiding. That is too much for the heart of that mother. In unspeakable sorrow she throws herself upon her son and weeps hot tears of love.

It is not long before the judge enters and asks: "Some one has said, that the murderer has fled into this house. Is that true"? But the mother cannot bring herself to reveal the murderer and says: "How can you think of anything like that?" "I told you that from the beginning; it cannot be so", the judge replied and left the house. But the next night the mother gave to the murderer some of her own son's clothing and sent him away with the words: "May God forgive you, as I forgive! Go and do penance for your crime!"—Truly a heroic, Christian act of love! This mother's heart was a true image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Heart of Mary, the Mother of Sorrows!

LESSON XIV.

The Our Father.

(6-7. Petition)

Catechetical Unit:

I.

- 1) What do we ask in the *Sixth* Petition? (Deharbe)
- 2) By whom are we tempted? (Deharbe)
- 3) Why does God permit us to be tempted? (Deharbe)
- 4) Is temptation itself a sin? (Deharbe)
- 5) What must we do in order that we may not yield? (Deharbe)

II.

- 1) What do we ask for in the *Seventh* Petition? (Deharbe)
- 2) Why do we add the word "*Amen?*" (Deharbe)

I.

Preparation. Dear children, St. Augustine once said: "He cannot live in peace with God, who does not live in peace with his neighbor." To be irreconcilable, unforgiving, is unchristian. To forgive and to love in a Christian manner, that is the express command of the Lord. Therefore Jesus Christ has taught us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us!" You have already heard about that. Let us review it briefly. (*Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson*).—

Now we come to the last two Petitions: "Lead us not into temptation! But deliver us from evil!" These two Petitions belong together. The very word "but" tells us that. Just as from the blossom the

fruit develops, so also from temptations oftentimes sin comes; but sin can lead to destruction. May God preserve us from that!

Aim. Let us explain these last two Petitions of the Our Father.

"Lead us not into temptation!"

Presentation. The Last Supper was over. Jesus told His beloved disciples in advance, that He was going away. Then Peter asked: "Lord, whither art Thou going?" Jesus replied: "Whither I go, you cannot follow Me". Peter said: "Why can I not follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thee". Jesus answered: "Thou wilt lay down thy life for Me? Amen, I say to thee: before the cock crows, thou wilt have denied Me thrice. Yes, all of you will be scandalized in Me this night and will go astray". But Peter would not believe it and said: "Lord, even though all the others are scandalized in Thee, I will not be scandalized in eternity". Jesus said once more: "Amen I say to thee: this very night before the cock crows twice, thou wilt deny Me thrice". Then Peter almost became angry and swore: "Even though I must die with Thee, I will not deny Thee".

But what happened? A few hours later Peter stood in the courtyard of the High Priest and was warming himself; for it was cold. Then a maid-servant approached him and said: "Thou wast with Jesus!" But he denied it and said: "I do not know Him and do not know what thou sayest!" Then he went out. Then the cock crew. Shortly afterwards another maid saw him and said: "Thou wast also with Him!" But he denied it with an oath and said: "I do not know the man!" After a while one of the servants cried out: "Truly, this is also one of them." Then Peter denied it again and began to curse and to swear: "I do not know this man!" While he was

still speaking, the cock crew a second time. Just then Jesus was led by and looked at Peter. Now Peter remembered the words of Jesus. He went out and wept bitterly. (*Show the pupils a large picture of this scene*).

Explanation. 1. God allowed a severe temptation to come upon Peter. Did He want Peter to commit sin? No, God does not want any sin; for He is holy. But why then the temptation?—Peter was to show his fidelity to Jesus. But the Apostle stood the test badly. Why did he fall so deeply? He had too much self-confidence and imagined, that it was not possible at all, that he should deny his Lord and Master. Yes, he even stubbornly contradicted his Lord. What ought Peter to have done, when Jesus warned him?—He ought to have prayed: “Lead us not into temptation!” God would surely have given him a strong grace in temptation. Then the Apostle would not have fallen so deeply nor would he have had to weep so bitterly and repent his whole life for the sin he committed.

What was possible in Peter's case is even much easier in regard to us. Therefore we pray in the Our Father: “Lead us not into temptation!” We mean: Dear God! turn away from us all temptations to evil. Remove from us the dangers to sin. If, however, the temptation comes, O God! give us a strong grace, so that we may be able to withstand it.—In the Sixth Petition we ask that God remove from us all temptations and all the dangers to sin; or, at least, give us sufficient grace to resist them. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis*).

2. God did not tempt Peter. As St. James says: “Let no man when he is tempted say, that he is tempted by God. For God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man” (i, 13). We have three enemies that seek our ruin. And these three enemies

God permits to tempt us, in order that we may prove our love of God. There is in every one of us an inclination to evil, *concupiscence*. We bring that with us into the world. It is an inheritance from our first parents—one of the evil effects of original sin. As St. Paul says: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit" (Gal. v, 17). You all have felt that inclination many a time. Then the *world* with all its vain pomps, bad examples and wicked teachings, calls out to us to forget God's holy Commandments and follow the voice of the world. When you get bigger you will realize that more and more. Finally the enemy of our souls is the *devil*, "who, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. v, 8). These three enemies tempt us to try our love of God.—We are tempted 1. by our own flesh or *concupiscence*; 2. by the world, and 3. by the devil. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

3. a) Peter failed grievously. But his sins, nevertheless, were a blessing for him. Is that true?—Before the Apostle had too much confidence in his own power and strength. He imagined, that he was so strong in love, that he could even lay down his life for Jesus. But see! this hero was frightened at a maid-servant's talk and denied his Divine Master shamefully three times. Now of course his eyes were opened and he was deeply ashamed and humbled. God permitted the Apostle to fall, in order to humble him. Was not then his sin also a blessing for him? That is always God's holy intention in temptations: He wants to keep us humble. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).—b) Peter learned something else from his fall. In the Garden of Olives Jesus had warned His disciples so earnestly and fatherly: "Watch and pray, lest you fall into temptations!" But Peter did not listen to the words of advice of his Master. And the end?—I wonder whether he ever again, from that moment, forgot the words of his Master? God always does that in temptations: He wants us to be

watchful and to try our faithfulness to Him. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). For whoever is not watchful in temptations, can fall any moment. If we overcome the temptation we prove our love and faithfulness to Jesus.

c) But temptations have also another good side. Do you suppose, that later on no more temptations ever came upon Peter? His whole life was a battle and a temptation, until he finally died on the cross like his Divine Master. But every temptation, which he overcame, increased his zeal for virtue and his merits for Heaven. That also is God's intention in temptations: He wants to increase our zeal for virtue, and our merits. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). Tell me now the entire answer! *God permits us to be tempted 1. to keep us humble; 2. to keep us watchful and to try our faithfulness to Him and 3. to increase our zeal for virtue, and our merits.*

4. You can easily see, then, from what we have just learned, that temptations are not, of themselves, a sin. They can, however, easily become sinful for us, if we put ourselves in the way of temptations carelessly as Peter did. He ought to have left that company; then perhaps he would not have fallen. Moreover, if we give in to temptations with our will, we also sin. For then we prefer the evil to the good; we choose sin to God. Remember, therefore: *Temptation in itself is not a sin; but to expose ourselves heedlessly to temptation, or to yield to it, is a sin.* (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

5. How can we overcome temptation?—Jesus Himself told us that expressly. In order that we may not yield to temptation we must especially watch and pray, as Christ our Lord says: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. xxvi, 41). (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). I have told you that time and again. Never forget that.

Write on the blackboard:

"Lead us not into temptation!"

1. May God remove temptations and dangers of sin from us!—Or at least, may He give us sufficient grace to resist!
2. Temptations *whence*?
 - a) from our flesh (concupiscence);
 - b) from the world;
 - c) from the devil.
3. Temptations *why*?
 - a) to keep us humble;
 - b) to keep us watchful and to try us;
 - c) to increase zeal for virtue, and our merits.
4. Temptation in itself—not a sin;
—sinful, if we heedlessly expose ourselves to it, or yield to it.
5. Temptations—how overcome?

"Watch and pray!"

Synthesis. What is the Sixth Petition?—What do we ask for in that Petition?—By whom are we tempted?—Why does God allow us to be tempted?—Is temptation of itself sinful?—When is it sinful?—How can we overcome temptation?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class.*)

Application. 1. We pray: "Lead us not into temptation!" May a man then lead himself into temptation? That was the great fault of Peter. He ought not to have gone into the courtyard of the High Priest. For thereby he placed himself in the way of temptation. No wonder, that he fell! Therefore, children, look at nothing, listen to nothing, that can easily stir up the sinful inclinations in your heart! Do not go with bad companions, who have pleasure in bad things! For how can you then pray: "Lead us not into temptation?" That would be making fun of the Lord God.

2. But what ought you to do, when, in spite of all, temptation comes? Make a virtue of temptation and call out for help: "Lord, save me! O Mary, help! Holy Guardian Angel, assist me!" Then temptation is not a sin, but rather will bring you a rich heavenly reward. St. Augustine says: "Our earthly life cannot be without temptations. No one can be crowned, unless he has conquered. No one can conquer, unless he has fought. No one can fight unless he has enemies and battles". Therefore it is good, if God allows temptations to come upon us. Every temptation, which we endure, is a victory over the enemy of our salvation. And every victory will some day shine as a new precious jewel in our heavenly crown.

II.

"But deliver us from evil!"

Presentation and Explanation. There is much evil in the world; sickness, poverty, to be despised, abandoned. But all of these evils will one day cease, most surely at death. There is only one evil, that can follow man over into eternity. Think of Judas! He began well. He was an Apostle and was allowed for more than three years to converse with Jesus, and to listen to His heavenly teachings and to see His miracles. A glorious reward was prepared for him. Jesus had promised: "You will sit upon twelve thrones!" But the Apostle and friend of Jesus ended badly. He became a self-murderer of his soul and body and his poor soul went down into the abyss and will never again see God's face. How was that possible? Sin made him unhappy. If only he had not forgotten to pray each day: "Deliver us from evil!" Then surely he would not have gone as far as he did.—Do you know what is the greatest evil?—It is sin and whatever is connected with sin—eternal damnation. That is what we mean in the Seventh Petition.—In the Seventh Petition we ask that God would preserve us from all evil

of soul and body, especially from sin and eternal damnation. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

One more thing and we have finished! We end the Our Father by saying one little word "Amen". It is a Hebrew word and means in English: So be it! The Catechism says: We add the word Amen, or So be it, to express by it our ardent desire and also our confidence of being heard. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Write on the blackboard:

"But deliver us from evil!"

1. May God preserve us—from all evils of soul and body—especially from sin and eternal ruin.
2. Amen—So be it!

Synthesis. Let us briefly review what we just learned. What do we ask for in the Seventh Petition?—Which is the greatest and really the only evil?—What does the word "Amen" mean?—Why do we add it?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class*).

Application. You have already heard of Niagara Falls. Perhaps some of you have seen it? The river casts itself down into the abyss, hundreds of feet below. Like thunder the waves roll and roar. Once a man was riding in a boat down the Niagara River. Tired he lay down in the boat and fell asleep. The people on the bank saw the boat, but believed that it was empty. But suddenly they noticed, that a life was in danger. They blew a horn—but all in vain. They threw stones into the river—all was useless. As rapidly as an arrow the boat was gliding along, always nearer and nearer to the abyss. Then the sleeping man awoke. He arises, reaches for the oars—it is too late! Only a few more seconds—and nothing is seen any more of the boat and the man. But from out of

the depths there sounded forth mighty thundering and roaring and sputtering like horrible music of the grave.

Children, do you understand the picture? Who is the man sleeping in the little boat? It is the poor sinner, who will not listen to the words of counsel of father and mother, of priest and teacher. He gives himself carelessly over to the sleep of sin, and does not realize, that he is continually approaching nearer and nearer the abyss. He will awaken in death—but too late! Children, are you perhaps also like that? Is there perhaps one of you so unhappy as to be in mortal sin? Do you want some day to be so unhappy? No, you say. Well then, always pray fervently with heart and mouth: “But deliver us from evil! Amen”.

IV.
THE ANGELIC SALUTATION.

LESSON XV.

The Hail Mary.

(Prayer of Praise)

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) What prayer do Catholics usually say after the Our Father? (Deharbe)
- 2) How many parts has the Hail Mary? (Deharbe)
- 3) Why do we address Mary by the words: "*Full of grace*"? (Deharbe)
- 4) Why do we say: "*The Lord is with thee*?" (Deharbe)
- 5) What is the meaning of these words of praise: "*Blessed art thou among women*"? (Deharbe)
- 6) Why do we say these words: "*Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*"? (Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, we learned in the last lesson about the Sixth and Seventh Petitions of the Our Father. What do you remember of that? (*Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson*).—When we pray to God, usually we greet, or salute, God's Mother also. We add to the Our Father the Hail Mary, or the prayer, which the Angel Gabriel used to salute the Mother of God. We call it also the Angelic Salutation.

1. Catholics usually say after the Our Father the prayer, which is said in honor of the Mother of God, and is called the Angelic Salutation, or the Hail Mary. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis*). The words: "Hail Mary!" in Latin are "Ave Maria"; hence this prayer is also at times called by those two words.—2. A glance at the Hail Mary tells us at once, that it is composed of two parts: First we praise Mary, then we beg her to help us, or we petition Mary. Therefore, the Hail Mary has two parts: a Prayer of Praise and a Prayer of Petition. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Which is the Prayer of Praise?—Which is the Prayer of Petition?—The Prayer of Praise has also two parts: One is from the Archangel Gabriel, the other is from Elizabeth.

Aim. *Today I am going to explain to you the Prayer of Praise.* Who of you can tell me the story of the Archangel Gabriel?—

Presentation. God sent the Archangel Gabriel to Nazareth, a little village of Galilee. There a young virgin lived from the house of David. She was betrothed to a just man, whose name was Joseph. But the virgin's name was Mary. Mary also hoped and waited with longing like all pious Jews for the promised Messias, or Christ.

Once Mary was all alone in her little room and was praying. Suddenly a heavenly light shone around her. And behold! an Angel in more than earthly beauty stands before her. Reverently he greets the virgin: "Hail, Mary! Full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women."

Mary was frightened and thought to herself, what manner of salutation this might be. But the Angel said: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God! Behold! thou shalt conceive a son, and thou shalt call Him Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David, His father. He shall rule in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end"!

Mary said to the Angel: "How shall this be done?" The Angel replied: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore the Holy One, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. And behold! Elizabeth also, thy cousin, shall conceive a son in her old age; for nothing is impossible with God".

Then Mary said: "Behold! the handmaid of the

Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." And the Angel left her.

At once Mary prepared for the journey and went in haste over the hill country into the city of Zachary. She entered into his house and saluted Elizabeth. At the same moment Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost and cried out with a loud voice: "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb! Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should visit me?" Then Mary rejoiced and said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour! For He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid. Behold! henceforth all generations shall call me blessed". (*Show the pupils a large picture of this scene*).

Explanation. 1. The Angel said: "*Hail Mary!*" Never did God send a salutation like that to any man. Therefore Mary must be a child of God's grace as no other person on earth.

a) There are great Saints in the Church. A St. Paul burned with love for God and with zeal of soul, to win all for Christ; he converted whole pagan nations. St. Agnes was led to the slaughter like an innocent lamb and joyfully offered her young life for Christ. St. Aloysius had a heart as pure and fragrant as a lily; he was "an Angel in the flesh". St. Vincent became a slave out of love, in order that he might save a poor slave. These Saints were rich in grace; yes, towards the end of their lives they were really "full of grace." But only *one* was full of grace even from the beginning of her life—Mary. She was immaculate from the first moment, even before her birth. Never did the poisonous breath of original sin soil her soul.—Mary was replenished with grace, even before her birth. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). Therefore the Angel could salute her: "Full of grace!"

b) A flower becomes more beautiful and fragrant,

the more it breathes in the light of the sun and the more it blossoms and unfolds itself. Thus it was with Mary too. Her soul continually became more beautiful and holy, richer in grace from day to day. For her entire life was only love and suffering for God. At last the hour came, when Jesus plucked this wondrous flower of grace and planted it in the heavenly Paradise before the throne of God.—Mary always increased in grace. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). That is the reason also, why the Angel could salute her: "Full of grace!"

c) I have not yet said all. You know from whom all grace comes. Jesus earned all grace by His life and sufferings and death. Christ is the Author of grace. But Mary received the Christ Child from the Holy Ghost; she was allowed to become the Mother of God and gave birth to the Son of God. That is a privilege and a dignity, the like of which no man on earth and no Angel in Heaven has ever received. But then Jesus certainly also gave to His Holy Mother a fullness of grace.—Mary brought forth the Author of all grace. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). Therefore the Angel could greet her: "Full of grace".

2. We hear a second praise from the Angel's mouth: "*The Lord is with thee!*" What might that mean?—

a) If we are God's children, the Lord is also with us. For a pure heart is a little kingdom of Heaven and God dwells in it. But God was with the Blessed Virgin in an entirely different manner. She was from the first moment the Immaculate One—the *Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Ghost*. And thus *she was united with God most intimately* as the branch is united with the vine. But more than that! The Angel said to the holy Virgin: "Thou shalt conceive a Son and thou shalt call His Name Jesus!" And Mary said: "Behold! the handmaid of the Lord". At that moment there occurred something great and wonderful: God's Son became a man and *Mary was made the Mother of*

God. Now Jesus dwelt in Mary; yes, she was even more closely united with Jesus than we are after Holy Communion. And henceforth the dear Mother of God was allowed to live for thirty three years with Jesus. How God must have loved Mary to confer such a dignity upon her! Surely, she is the *Chosen Daughter of the heavenly Father*. You see then, God is in a most particular manner, with the Blessed Virgin, wherefore she is justly called the Chosen Daughter of the heavenly Father, the true Mother of the Divine Son, and the Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Ghost. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). How closely she is united to each of the Divine Persons! Therefore the Angel saluted her: "The Lord is with thee!"

b) Then, of course, there came for Mary the hard hour of parting. But it was a farewell, that was to give way to a happy meeting. Love and longing gradually consumed her motherly heart and Mary died. However, Jesus awakened His Holy Mother again from death and took her up into Heaven and crowned her as Heaven's Queen. Now she is perfectly united with God and is nearest to the throne of God.—The Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen of All the Saints is nearest to the throne of God in Heaven. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). Therefore also the Angel said: "The Lord is with thee!"

3. The Angel confers a third praise upon Mary: "*Blessed art thou among women!*" Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, repeated these words. There are thousands of holy women and virgins in the Old Testament. But none of all the generations of women is like to Mary. Why?—The first woman, Eve, brought a curse on the world; but Mary brought us salvation through Her Divine Son. She alone was conceived without sin. She alone was chosen for the high dignity of Mother of God. Only Mary is Mother and at the same time Virgin. Thus Mary stands high above all women and virgins. She is the happiest daughter of Eve.—Therefore the Angel said to her: "Blessed

art thou among women!"—We say those words, because Mary is the happiest of all the daughters of Eve; for 1. she was chosen before all to be the Mother of God; 2. she alone is a Mother and, at the same time, a virgin; 3. the first woman entailed a curse on the world, Mary, on the other hand, brought us salvation. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

4. Mary hastened in joy to Elizabeth. For she had already received the Christ Child from the Holy Ghost and carried Him in her bosom as in a holy tabernacle. Elizabeth knew that also through the Holy Ghost and therefore she cried out in a loud voice: "*Blessed is the fruit of thy womb!*" She meant to say: Blessed and praised be thy Divine Child, Jesus!—Now you understand better, why we praise Mary. The moon has all its light from the sun; Mary has all her honor from the heavenly sun, Jesus Christ. Now you can also understand, why Mary cried out: "Behold! from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!"—We praise Mary to show that the veneration of Mary is inseparable from the veneration of Christ, and that we praise the Mother for the sake of the Son. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). Therefore we add to the greeting of the Angel also the words: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb!"

Write on the blackboard:

1. Our Father usually followed by—Hail Mary

(Angelic Salutation, or Ave Maria).

2. "*Hail Mary*"—a) Prayer of Praise;
b) Prayer of Petition.

"Full of grace!"

Mary { 1) united with God upon earth;
2) continually increased in grace;
3) gave birth to the Author of grace.

"The Lord is with thee!"

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| Mary | { | 1) united with God on earth;
2) Chosen Daughter of the heavenly Father;
3) true Mother of the Divine Son;
4) Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Ghost;
5) Queen of Saints in Heaven—nearest to God. |
|------|---|--|

"Blessed art thou among women!"

Mary—happiest of all daughters of Eve—alone
 Mother of God; alone Mother and Virgin—
 brought us salvation.

"Blessed is the fruit of thy womb!"

Mary—blessed because of her Son.

Synthesis. A heavenly messenger greeted Mary and bestowed upon her a threefold praise.—What is the praise conferred upon Mary by her cousin Elizabeth?—Why do we pray to Mary: "Full of grace?"—Why do we say: "The Lord is with thee?"—Why do we pray: "Blessed art thou among women?"—Why do we add the words: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb?"—What prayer do Catholics usually add to the Our Father?—Of how many parts does the Hail Mary consist?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class*).

Application. 1. Mary is Mother of God and God's Son became a man. The Church reminds us of that each day three times at the ringing of the "Angelus" bell. And each time we ought to thank God for that and greet Mary as the Angel did. You all know how to pray the "Angelus". Now you will also better understand this beautiful prayer. Let us pray it together now:

"The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary and she conceived by the Holy Ghost". Hail Mary, etc.

"Behold the hand-maid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word". Hail Mary, etc.

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us". Hail Mary, etc.

2. Now another doubt comes to me: Has God nothing against our saluting Mary like that? I ask: God the Father? or God the Son? or God the Holy Ghost? — God the *Father* sent one of the highest heavenly princes to Mary and had him salute her: "Hail, Mary!" If the heavenly Father honors Mary like that, then surely we may honor Mary also. Will God the *Son* have anything against our honoring His Holy Mother? What sort of a son would that be, who would not rejoice, when we honor his mother? When we honor the son, we also honor the mother. And what will the *Holy Ghost* say to that? If the sun had human understanding, do you suppose, that it would be jealous, if you were to look with joy upon the most beautiful flower and admire it? Why that would be foolish, would it not? For the flower would not be so beautiful, if it were not for the sun. Mary is the most beautiful flower among all the souls of men; but she is so beautiful and lovable and holy through the Holy Ghost. Now will the Holy Ghost have anything against our honoring her, whom He has sanctified so wonderfully? Therefore let us honor Mary everyday with childlike, pious heart, until some day we shall see the dear Mother of God in Heaven and salute her with the Angels and Saints: "Hail Mary!"

LESSON XVI.

The Hail Mary

(Prayer of Petition)

Catechetical Unit:

- 1) Of what is the Prayer of Petition composed?
(Deharbe)
- 2) Why were these words added by the Church?
(Deharbe)
- 3) Has the Blessed Virgin great influence with God?
(Deharbe)

Preparation. Dear children, the first part of the Hail Mary—the Prayer of Praise—comes from the Holy Ghost. For the Holy Ghost has placed the greeting into the Angel's mouth: "Hail, Mary! Full of grace. The Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women"! And the Holy Ghost inspired Elizabeth with the words: "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb"! What these words signify, you already know. Let us review that teaching. (*Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson*).

To the Prayer of Praise the Church has added another little Prayer of Petition: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"!—The Prayer of Petition is composed of the words, which were added by the Church: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen." (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis*).

Aim. Now I am going to explain for you this short, but powerful prayer of the Church.

Presentation and Explanation.

1. We say to Mary "*Mother of God*." A heretic (Nestorius) in the early days of the Church was un-

willing to give Mary this honor. He thought and maintained, that Mary, was only the mother of the man, Christ, not the mother of God. The Church could not tolerate that. Therefore the Bishops assembled in the Church of St. Mary at Ephesus. St. Cyril especially fought with fiery zeal for the honor of the dear Mother of God. The meeting lasted from early morning until late at night. With holy impatience the people were waiting, meanwhile, outside in front of the church doors for the decision; for all were deeply grieved, because they were no longer allowed to say to Mary, "Mother of God." Finally the doors open, the Bishops come out and announce: "Mary is really the Mother of God!" Then indescribable jubilation reigned among the Christian people and they led the Bishops in triumphal procession through the gloriously lighted and decorated streets of the city.

We all rejoice heartily, that we may say to Mary "Mother of God". That is the most beautiful of her names of honor. What is a king or an emperor or a president as compared with the Mother of God? What is an Angel or an Archangel, a Cherub or a Seraph? No other honor is like to this dignity. But how could the impudent heretic venture to take away from Mary this dignity! What did the Angel say to Mary?—"Thy child shall be called the Son of God". If her child is the Son of God, then Mary must be the Mother of God. Jesus also called Mary Mother. While dying on the Cross He said: "Mother, behold thy son!" Mary is really the Mother of God.—By the words in the Prayer of Petition we profess before the whole world, that Mary is truly the Mother of God, because her Child is truly God. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). We rejoice over this fact and we congratulate Mary, particularly on the Feast of the Annunciation.

2. Because Mary is the Mother of God, we also have a childlike confidence in her and pray to her with all our heart: "Mother of God, *pray for us!* But may

we pray like that? There are indeed Christians, who do not want to pray like that. Let us see, who is right!

In the Bible History the story is told of a heathen woman, who cried out in prayer: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David! My daughter is grievously troubled by a wicked spirit". Jesus replied: "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel!" But the woman threw herself before Jesus and said: "Lord, help me!" He replied: "It is not right to take away the bread from the children—that is, from the Jews—and to cast it before the dogs—that is, the heathens". But she said: "Yea, Lord; for also the whelps eat of the crumbs, that fall from the table of the master". Then Jesus said: "O woman, great is thy Faith! Go, the evil spirit is departed from thy daughter".

But why have I related this? See, Jesus helped the sick girl at the fervent and persistent prayer of the mother; and yet, she was only a simple heathen woman, not even a Jewish mother. Now what if His real Mother Mary were to ask? Do you suppose that Jesus would refuse His Mother any petition? Will He say: "Do not bother Me"? That surely would grieve her motherly heart very much. But did Jesus ever grieve the heart of His dear Mother? Did He not at the petition of His Mother once even work a miracle? At the wedding of Cana Mary only said: "They have no wine". Therefore she only knocked faintly at Jesus' Heart, as it were, and yet her petition was granted. So it was on earth. Do you suppose that it will be different in Heaven? St. Bernard calls Mary even "the interceding Omnipotence". Do you understand that?—He means, that Mary can do all things through her petitions, or prayers. Christian parents like to give their alms through their children; that makes the children feel happy. Thus also does God gladly give us, what we need, through the hands of Mary. That is also a joy for the Mother of God

and a part of her heavenly reward. We know that and therefore we may say confidently and with all our heart: "Mother of God, pray for us!" You see, then, the words of the Prayer of Petition were added by the Church, that we may often implore the assistance of Mary's prayers in all our necessities. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

3. But at the same time we add the word: "*sinners!*" That has also its meaning.—A poor servant girl went wrong and fell from one sin into another. Gradually her life became such a burden to her, that she said: "I can no longer bear to lead such a life; I am going to put myself out of the way!" When it became dark, the poor sinner went outside and wanted to throw herself into the water. But first she knelt in order to pray three Hail Marys. Suddenly she changes her mind, goes home, but can find no peace. The following day the old temptation returned. She buys poison, mixes it with water, lay down to rest and is about to reach for the deadly drink. But once more the thought rushes through her mind, that she should recite the three Hail Marys. She does it, and before she has finished saying these prayers, she falls into a deep sleep. Early the next morning she was awakened by the solemn ringing of the bells of the neighboring church. Frightened she starts up; she still holds the glass with the poisoned water in her hand. She gets up, hastens to the church, to see what was going on there so early in the morning, and whether she can still find any comfort for her troubled soul. A missionary is just ascending the pulpit. Impressively and consolingly his words make their way into her heart. The poor sinner weeps bitter tears of penance and confesses her sins to the priest. Then peace returns once more into her heart.

This sinner had come to the very edge of the abyss because of her sins. Already she was about to take the last step. In the next moment her soul would have gone down into the darkness of eternity. What was

her salvation?—Three times does the sinner pray the Hail Mary; three times she cries out: “Mother of God! Pray for us sinners!” Mary hears her prayer. She sees her child in danger of death. Then she approaches Her dear Son, in order to beg: “Have mercy; save this poor soul, this child of my sorrow!” And what happened?—Without Mary the sinner would surely have been lost forever. Mary does not desert her children; for she is *the Refuge of sinners*.—You see then, these words were added by the Church, that we may often implore the assistance of her prayers in all our necessities. (*Repeat together; use the black-board*). Therefore let us henceforth always pray with childlike confidence: “Pray for us sinners!”

4. Now perhaps you will think: “But I am not such a great sinner!” I am ready to believe that. But have you no sins at all? Just think earnestly over the past; your conscience will make many a reproach. And even though a person had no sin at all, still he has many *needs*. Perhaps your father is out of work or your mother is sickly. Perhaps you are in danger of sin or your young heart is severely tempted. In all these needs we ought to pray to Mary. But one thing especially must weigh heavily upon your heart—the desire for a *happy death*! For as we die, so will we live and remain for all eternity. Precisely in that hour Mary will not desert us. Just listen to an example!

A boy had a very good and pious mother. Very early in life this mother had implanted in that innocent child's heart a fervent love for God's Mother. The boy became a man. But for a long time he was not as he used to be in his younger days, but he was leading an indifferent, sinful life. Only one thing he had not forgotten; every morning and night he still recited one Hail Mary. Easter approached. “Well, I must confess again,” he said to himself. And so he went to Confession on Good Friday night. Early Easter morning he got up, in order to prepare himself

for Holy Communion. But suddenly he falls to the floor and dies immediately. Is not that remarkable? With him to confess and to die were almost one and the same thing. Whence this grace?—The poor sinner had not forgotten Mary; therefore neither did God's Mother forget that poor sinner in his last hour.

Now you can understand, why the Church has us pray: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen". We pray thus, in order that we may often implore the assistance of Mary's prayers in all our necessities, and especially for obtaining the grace of a happy death. (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

Write on the blackboard:

1. Mary—Mother of God—her Child truly God.
2. Mary—Intercessor—Interceding Omnipotence.
3. Mary—Refuge of sinners—our Mother.
4. Mary—Helper—especially in hour of death.

Synthesis. In the Our Father we pray according to the Son of God; in the Hail Mary we pray according to the Holy Ghost and the Church. What is the Prayer of Petition in the Hail Mary?—Why did the Church add these words?—Why is Mary so high above all other mothers?—Why do we say: "Pray for us sinners?"—With what right do we call Mary the Refuge of sinners?—(*Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism and blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class*).

Application. 1. In the Lord's Prayer we address God: "Our Father!" In the Angelic Salutation we address Mary: "Holy Mary, Mother of God"! As often as we say that we give ourselves an instruction in Christian Doctrine. How so? Just listen! A child speaks every few moments holy words carelessly or in anger. Or a child does not want to obey its mother and speaks to her saucily and stubbornly.

That child cannot get along with its brothers and sisters and calls them bitter and bad names. Or the child even uses shameful and impure words. Do you think, that the dear Mother of God will have a special joy, when such a child says each day: "Holy Mary, Mother of God?" These words come from a bad and impure heart and will seem to Mary, just the same as when a person speaks into the face of another with a bad breath. Do you see? Every Ave Maria gives us this instruction: Be pious and pure like a child of Mary!

2. But if one must be so pure and clean of soul, almost like the Angel, that first spoke that greeting, who then is able to say a good Ave Maria! It is not meant in that sense. There are two kinds of sinners: The one class likes to be in sin just as a pig in its filth; the other class of sinners looks upon sin as a cross and a burden. Whoever has great sins and does not want to give them up, for him each Ave Maria is as an insult to the dear Mother of God. But whoever heartily repents of his sins and wants to be free from them, he may indeed pray with all his heart: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners!" Precisely because Mary is holy, she has compassion on the poor sinner. And if the Angels rejoice, as Jesus says, when a sinner is converted from his wicked ways, how greatly will not the dear Mother of God rejoice! For Mary has stood under the Cross as the Mother of Sorrows for all sinners.

THE END.

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